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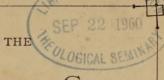
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Rev. Roland B. Rosson, Jr.

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LOVE OF GOD.

BY

HENRY JENNINGS, F.R.S.L.

WITH RECOMMENDATORY REMARKS

BY

HORATIUS BONAR, D.D.

Fifth Thousand.

LONDON:

J. NISBET & CO., 21, BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCLXV.

MDCCCLA

Entered at Stationers' Hall.



MY BELOVED SISTERS,

This Volume

IS MOST CORDIALLY DEDICATED,

AS A MEMENTO OF MUCH ESTEEM AND SINCERE AFFECTION.

THE AUTHOR.



CONTENTS.

				Page
RECOMMENDATORY REMARKS .				. 7
God's Love Desirable .				. 9
God's Love Incomprehensible				. 19
God's Love Disinterested				• 34
God's Love Sovereign			• .	• 49
God's Love Benevolent .				• 59
God's Love Pardoning	. 6			. 70
God's Love Justifying .				. 100
God's Love Sanctifying				. 132
God's Love Glorifying .				. 162
God's Love Everlasting	63			. 175



RECOMMENDATORY REMARKS.

Kelso, September 14, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have gone through your book as carefully as my time allowed, and have been interested in it.

It brings out vividly and Scripturally the great truths which you propose to discuss concerning the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. These it illustrates well by suitable anecdotes from many sources. It is fitted to be useful, and, being written in a vigorous style, will be read with interest, I doubt not, by many.

I am, yours truly,
HORATIUS BONAR.

North Bow, London, October, 1865.

MR. JENNINGS has written on the profoundest theme given to man to contemplate, "The Love of God." I have gone through the volume with intense pleasure: it abounds with noble truths elegantly expressed, and calculated to be of great and permanent service. I heartily wish it a wide circulation.

EDWARD SCHNADHORST, F.R.S.L.



GOD'S LOVE DESIRABLE.

SHORT time since, when visiting a poor dying saint, he thus addressed me: "Sir, there is no person in the world so happy as a real Christian. I feel the blessed effects of having given myself entirely to Christ when I was young. I have been a servant of the Lord Jesus nearly seventy years. I have had no reason to regret having entered his service; but, on the contrary, I am thankful that he called me by his grace to be his child. I am truly happy on my dying bed to be able to bear my humble testimony to the constancy and all-sufficiency of his love, and the perpetuity of his faithfulness. I feel confident that he will never change; that he will never leave or forsake his people; that he will never leave or forsake me. He has said for my encouragement, and for the encouragement of all his people, 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee'" (Isaiah lxv. 10).

God's love is immutable and immovable. Mountains, rocks, forests-all may and will decay; but "the Lord liveth:" "his years shall have no end." The gourd we have carefully nurtured and tended may wither like Jonah's: the gold we have been so long striving to amass may make to itself wings and fly away: the cisterns which we have been hewing for many years with such laboured pains may be broken in an instant: the loved ones upon whom we have lavished affection and fortune may be speedily stricken at our side: all earthly comforts may flee in a moment: all wise and crafty plans may be frustrated before the rising of to-morrow's sun: everything belonging to us may be soon laid in utter desolation; but the love of God will never change: he is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so doth the Lord compass his people from henceforth and for ever."

Precious thought to have God as our everlasting portion and friend! in him is all power and goodness, in him is everlasting strength; and these attributes he has displayed in our salvation. If we are the children of God, we are the purchased possession (Ephesians i. 14). That is the fruit of the blood of the Son of God; yea, the chief fruit, the end and perfection of all the fruits and efficacy of that blood.

How will it fill our souls with perpetual joy, to think that through his blood we have escaped the violence of the world, the snares of Satan, the seducements of flesh, the curse of the law, the wrath of an offended God, the accusations of a guilty conscience, and the vexing doubts and fears of an unbelieving heart, and are now safe in the presence of God! Now he cries to us, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow" (Lam. i. 12); and we scarce regard the mournful voice, or turn aside to view the wounds. But then our perfected souls will feel, and return love for love. With what amazing gratitude will redeemed saints everlastingly behold their blessed Redeemer, the purchaser, and the price together with the possession! Nor will the view of his wounds of love renew our wounds of sorrow. He whose first words to a great sinner, after his resurrection, were "Woman, why weepest thou?" (John xx. 15), knows how to kindle love and joy, without any cloud of sorrow, or storm of tears. If anything we enjoy were purchased with the life of our dearest friend, how highly should we value it! If a dying friend leave us a token of his love, how carefully do we preserve it as a memento! and will not then the death and blood of our Lord everlastingly sweeten our possessed glory? His sufferings were to satisfy the justice that required blood, by bearing what was due to sinners, in order to restore to them the life they had lost, and the happiness from which they had fallen. The work of Christ's redemption so well pleased the Father that he gave him power to advance his chosen, and give them the glory which was given to himself; and all this "according to his good pleasure, and the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians i. 9, 11). There is every reason why Christians should rejoice, and banish every doubt and all desponding feelings, since God has said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3). If you, dear

reader, are a Christian, you will rejoice in the sovereignty of Divine love; you will rejoice that the love of God has been shown towards you, that his love is from everlasting to everlasting, that it is endless in duration, and unlike creature affection, which is ever changing. If rightly influenced by this love, you will exclaim, "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

If you and I are true Christians, we shall love Christ Jesus more than all our near and dear connections. A martyr was asked whether he did not love his wife and children, who stood weeping by him. "Love them!" said he; "yes, if all the world were gold, and at my disposal, I would give it all for the satisfaction of living with them, though it were in prison; yet, in comparison with Christ, I love them not." We should strive thus to give our blessed Redeemer the pre-eminence.

No one can do so much for us in life or in the hour of death as the Saviour. Some of the martyrs have proved the all-sufficiency of his grace in their most trying hour. John Lambert suffered in the year 1538. No man was treated at the stake with more cruelty than this holy martyr. They burned him with a slow fire by inches. But God was with him in the midst of the flame, and supported him in all the anguish of nature. Just before he expired, he lifted up such hands as he had, all flaming with fire, and cried out to the people with his dying voice, with these glorious words, "None but Christ!" He was at last bent down into the fire and expired. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God."

Do you and I, dear reader, feel that God's love is desirable, yea, indispensable to our happiness? Do we feel that supreme love to him which we must and shall have if we are his children? Are we conscious that the knowledge of himself, as revealed in Jesus, is the beginning, the pledge, and the way to the enjoyment of eternal life in its best and highest sense, and that, therefore, he shines into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus, makes it the medium of communicating unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, and bids us not to glory in our wisdom, wealth, or fame, but to glory in our knowlege of himself? This also led our Lord to say, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

Life eternal will be the portion of all who love God, of all who love his dear Son Jesus Christ: are you and I loving the dear and blessed Redeemer as we ought? if not, let us make use of the following prayer, and God will bless us abundantly.

O gracious Redeemer! I have already neglected thee too long. I have too often injured thee; have crucified thee afresh by my guilt and impenitence, as if I had taken pleasure in putting thee to an open shame. But my heart now bows itself before thee, in humble, unfeigned submission. I desire to make no terms with thee but these—that I may be entirely thine. Teach me, O Lord, what thou wouldst have me to do! For I desire to learn the lesson, and to learn it that I may practise it. If it be more than my feeble powers can answer, thou wilt, I hope, give me more strength; and in that strength I will serve thee. Oh, receive a soul which thou hast made willing to be thine!

No more, O blessed Jesus, no more is it necessary to be seech and entreat me. Permit me rather to address myself to thee, with all the importunity of a perishing sinner who at length sees and knows there is salvation in no other. Permit me now, Lord, to come and throw myself at thy feet, like a helpless outcast who has no shelter but in thy generous compassion; like one pursued by the avenger of blood, and seeking earnestly an admittance "into the city of refuge."

I wait for the Lord: my soul doth wait: and in thy word do I hope. My soul confides in thy goodness, and adores it. I adore the patience which has borne with me so long, and the grace that now makes me heartily willing to be thine; to be thine on thine own terms, thine on any terms. Oh, secure this treacherous heart to thyself! Oh, unite me to thee by such inseparable bonds that none of the allurements of flesh and blood, none of the vanities of an ensnaring world, none of the solicitations of sinful companions, may draw me back from thee, and plunge me into new guilt and ruin! "Be surety, O Lord, for thy servant for good," that I may still keep my hold on thee, and so on eternal life; till at length I know more fully, by joyful and everlasting experience, how complete a Saviour thou art. Amen.

One there is above all others
Who deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end:
They who once his kindness prove
Find it everlasting love!

Which of all our friends, to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconcil'd in him to God:
This was boundless love indeed!
Jesus is a Friend in need.

When he lived on earth abased,
Friend of sinners was his name:
Now to heav'nly glory raised,
He rejoiceth in the same;
Still he calls them brethren, friends,
And to all their wants attends.

Could we bear from one another
What he daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious Friend and Brother
Loves us, though we treat him thus:
Though for good we render ill,
He accounts us brethren still.

Oh, for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love:
We, alas! forget too often
What a Friend we have above;
But when home our souls are brought
We will love thee as we ought.

GOD'S LOVE INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

OD'S love passeth knowledge; even the wisest and best men have been unable fully to measure its lengths, fathom its depths, and comprehend its breadths: it defies all human computation. The whole angelic world will for ever wonder, admire, and adore the love of God our heavenly Father. Do we admire the infinite love of God in the gift of his dear Son Jesus Christ? Can we say, I love thee above all the powers of language to express! I love thee for what thou art to thy creatures, who are, in their various forms, every moment deriving being, knowledge, and happiness from thee, in numbers and degrees far beyond what my narrow imagination can conceive. But oh, I adore and

love thee vet far more for what thou art in thyself, for that store of power which creation has not diminished, and which can never be exhausted; for that infinite perfection which makes thee thine own happiness, thine own end. I rejoice in beholding thy face, O Lord, and in calling thee my Father in Christ. Since thou art, such thou wilt be for time and for eternity. Are we rightly influenced by the marvellous love of God in Christ Jesus? Let us pause for a moment, and seriously consider this important question: it is one of vital importance to all. We must never think lightly of the love of God towards a lost and ruined world; on the contrary, we must say, What shall I render to him for all the blessings of providence and of grace? Instruct me, O ye oracles of eternal truth! Instruct me, ye elder brethren in the family of my heavenly Father! Instruct me, above all, O thou Spirit of wisdom and of love, what I may be able to do to express my love to the Great Eternal Fountain of love, and to prove my fidelity to him, who has already done so much to engage it, and who will take so much pleasure in owning and rewarding it! Can we say, I feel the golden chain of Divine love encircling me and all who love the Saviour,

binding us close to each other, joining us in one body, and diffusing (as it were) one soul through all? May happiness, true and sublime, perpetual and ever-growing happiness, reign through the whole world of God's rational and obedient creatures in heaven and on earth! And may every revolted creature, capable of being recovered and restored, be made obedient! Yea, may the necessary punishment of those who are irrecoverable be overruled by infinite wisdom and love to the good of the whole! If we cherish such sentiments as these, and strive more and more to understand the love of God, our admiration of it will grow daily; and, though it may, and even will, surpass our entire and full conception, yet we may rest fully satisfied that the more frequently and prayerfully we meditate upon it, the better we shall be enabled with all saints to comprehend it.

Some men love each other sufficiently to sacrifice their own lives for each other. A gentleman of Sweden was condemned to suffer death, as a punishment for certain offences committed by him in the discharge of an important public office, which he had filled for a number of years with an integrity never before

suspected or impeached. His son, a youth about eighteen years of age, was no sooner apprised of the affecting situation in which his father was placed, than he flew to the judge who had pronounced the fatal decree, and, throwing himself at his feet, prayed that he might be allowed to suffer in the room of a father whom he loved, and whose loss he thought it was impossible for him to survive. The magistrate was amazed at this extraordinary procedure in the son, and would hardly be persuaded that he was sincere in it. Being at length satisfied, however, that the young man actually wished to save his father's life at the expense of his own, he wrote an account of the whole affair to the king; and his majesty immediately sent orders to grant a free pardon to the father, and to confer a title of honour on his son. This last mark of royal favour, however, the youth begged leave with all humility to decline; and the motive for the refusal of it was not less noble than the conduct by which he had deserved it was generous and disinterested. "Of what avail," exclaimed he, "could the most exalted title be to me, humbled as my family already is in the dust? Alas! would it not serve as a monument to perpetuate in the minds of my

countrymen the remembrance of an unhappy father's shame?" His majesty the king of Sweden actually shed tears when this magnanimous speech was reported to him; and, sending for the heroic youth to court, he appointed him to a confidential office.

How cheerfully ought we, as Christians, to sacrifice all we have, even our lives, for Jesus, who has done so much for us—even died that we might live!

The economy of redemption is just for sinners; it is a deep, mysterious economy—one, certainly, of the most mysterious things that God ever did-beyond expectation, beyond reason, beyond all the stretch of imagination. But is this any reason for discrediting it? On the contrary, is not this one of the strongest reasons for believing it? Sin itself (which this mysterious redemption specifically regards) is a wonderful mystery. It is an exception and a disorder in the universe: the only original disorder that is the cause of all others. God hates it. How could he permit it? Prevent it he certainly could, if he is God. He does now prevent it in heaven, and, when he pleases, on earth: he begins its prevention in every sinner he regenerates; and, if he cannot prevent it when

and where he will, how can we pray to him to make us holy, and how can we trust him to keep us for ever in heaven and secure us from all sin and all loss for ever? Able to prevent it, then, and hating it—hating it more than he hates anything else-how could he suffer it to come into existence? This is a strange mystery. I cannot explain it. Yet sin is here. The fact is unquestionable. It stains every human heart; it works mischief in every community; it lets loose pestilences; it wakes enmity and avarice and envy, makes wars, weaves shrouds, and digs graves; and, beyond all this, in another world, it has built Hell; and, if that hell were not to be eternal, I could not believe that Jesus Christ had come down from heaven and died on the cross to redeem sinners from it. The eternity of hell and the wonders of Christ's redemption correspond. If one is true, the other is true. If one is false, the other must be false. The marvel of Christ's propitiation corresponds with the marvel of sin's existence. And because, just because there is something wonderful, deep, and mysterious in the fact that the Ancient of Days should become an infant, that the sinless should suffer, that blood should atone, and that God should be reconciled to sinners in that way—just precisely because of this dark wonder, I can believe and trust in it.

The mystery of redemption perfectly corresponds with what redemption aims after; God saving sinners is as much above me and beyond me as God permitting sin; and I am driven to believe in the blood of Christ. The strangeness of redemption corresponds with the strangeness of sin; the mystery of the one assorts with the mystery of the other; God is as much above me in Christ as he is above me in Adam, and in both—the wonders of sin and the wonders of redemption—he is precisely like himself, infinite, amazing, and for ever incomprehensible.

The redeeming love of God towards sinners is a bright and blessed unfolding of God himself. It discloses his character, and it opens up an avenue to our knowledge of Him. What if he is loved because he first loved us? He is loved, after all, for what he is—for the glorious excellence his redeeming work has unfolded. He is loved as faith loves him, a faith which does not see God as a cold abstraction, a soulless system, but sees him in his true nature, and loves him because "God is love." Our hearts should be set upon God, not upon worldly objects; not on things earthly,

but upon things heavenly. God should be all and in all with us. If we are thus influenced by the Spirit of God, we shall resemble the excellent Mr. Renwick, the last of the Scottish martyrs, who, speaking of his sufferings for conscience' sake, says, "Enemies think themselves satisfied that we are put to wander in mosses, and upon mountains; but, even amidst the storms of these last two nights, I cannot express what sweet times I have had, when I had no covering but the dark curtains of night. Yea, in the silent watch, my mind was led out to admire the deep and inexpressible ocean of joy; wherein the whole family of heaven swim. Each star led me to wonder what HE must be, who is the star of Jacob, of whom all stars borrow their shining." The love of God in Christ Jesus supported this martyr under his great trials; and that same love can and will support every Christian. God has said, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." What a gracious promise is this made by a covenant-keeping God! how much we all owe to him for his great mercy and lovingkindness! Did we feel our infinite debt of gratitude to so kind a Father as we ought, we should be overwhelmed when contemplating the mysteries of redeeming love. Nothing can support or enrich us like the love of God. The Word of God, which makes known this truth so clearly to us, has been the means, through the Divine Spirit, of solacing the saints in poverty and the greatest affliction.

At a meeting of the Blackheath Auxiliary Bible Society, in the year 1815, Dr. Gregory, of Woolwich, related the following very interesting facts :-- " More than twelve months ago, I went, pursuant to the request of a poor, but benevolenthearted woman in my neighbourhood, to visit an indigent man deeply afflicted. On entering the cottage, I found him alone, his wife having gone to procure him milk from a kind neighbour. I was startled by the sight of a pale, emaciated man, a living image of death, fastened upright in his chair by a rude mechanism of cords and belts hanging from the ceiling. He was totally unable to move either hand or foot, having been more than four years entirely deprived of the use of his limbs, yet the whole time suffering extreme anguish from swellings at all his joints. As soon as I had recovered a little from my surprise at seeing so pitiable an

object, I asked, 'Are you left alone, my friend, in this deplorable situation?' 'No, sir,' replied he, in a touchingly feeble tone of mild resignation (nothing but his lips and eyes moving while he spake), 'I am not alone; for God is with me.' On advancing, I soon discovered the secret of his striking declaration; for his wife had left on his knees, propped with a cushion formed for the purpose, a Bible, lying open at a favourite portion of the Psalms of David! I sat down by him, and conversed with him. On ascertaining that he had but a small weekly allowance certain, I inquired how the remainder of his wants were supplied. 'Why, sir,' said he, ''tis true, as you say, seven shillings a week would never support us; but when it is gone I rely upon the promise I found in this book: "Bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure;" and I have never been disappointed yet; and so long as God is faithful to his word, I never shall.' I asked him if he ever felt tempted to repine under the pressure of so long-continued and heavy a calamity. 'Not for the last three years,' said he: 'blessed be God for it;' the eye of faith sparkling and giving life to his pallid countenance while he made the declaration: "for I have learned from this book in whom to believe; and, though I am aware of my weakness and unworthiness, I am persuaded that he will "not leave me, nor forsake me." And so it is that often, when my lips are closed with locked jaw, and I cannot speak to the glory of God, he enables me to sing his praises in my heart.'

"Gladly would I sink into the obscurity of the same cottage, gladly even would I languish in the same chair, could I but enjoy the same uninterrupted communion with God, be always filled with the same 'strong consolation,' and constantly behold, with equal vivid perception, the same celestial crown sparkling before me."

Though we cannot, in our present state, comprehend entirely and to the fullest extent the love of God, it is our duty and privilege to add to our knowledge every moment we live. The language of a true believer is, "As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." And when, by reason of sin, God withdraws himself for a time, you will hear the Christian, in true contrition of spirit, exclaim, "Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my

mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me. I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him. But he knoweth the way I take, and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." What holy trust, after a season of barrenness and depression, does the believer place in Jesus! Do we honour him by trusting him in everything, and under all circumstances do we appreciate his love enough to place all our temporal and spiritual affairs in his hands? if not, we have not much love within us. Can we say what a poor man said to me once, that "to be loved by God was worth ten thousand worlds, and that he would give up all the riches of the universe, if he had them, rather than be deprived of the love of his blessed Redeemer." A good hope, through grace, of eternal glory he declared to be to him on his dying bed of more value than mortal tongue could tell; and, as he grew weaker, and drew nearer to the eternal world, he said, "The love of my Saviour

is stronger and more precious; yea, much more precious than the love of all earthly objects beside, or combined. Though I am severely tempted and heavily afflicted, I shall never despair; no, never, since my heavenly Father says to me, 'Fear not; for I have redeemed thee: I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour'" (Isa. xliii. 1—3.)

May we, dear reader, have as much grace imparted to us to "live" in God's fear as this aged saint had, and then we shall, like him, esteem all things worthless when compared with the love of God.

My gracious Redeemer I love! His praises aloud I'll proclaim, And join with the armies above To shout his adorable name: To gaze on his glories Divine Shall be my eternal employ, And feel them incessantly shine, My boundless, ineffable joy.

He freely redeem'd with his blood My soul from the confines of hell, To live on the smiles of my God, And in his sweet presence to dwell; To shine with the angels of light, With saints and with seraphs to sing; To view with eternal delight My Jesus, my Saviour, my King.

In Meshech as yet I reside,
A darksome and restless abode!
Molested with foes on each side,
And longing to dwell with my God.
Oh, when shall my spirit exchange
This cell of corruptible clay
For mansions celestial, and range
Through realms of ineffable day?

My glorious Redeemer! I long To see thee descend on the cloud, Amidst the bright, numberless throng, And mix with the triumphing crowd. Oh, when wilt thou bid me ascend, To join in thy praises above, To gaze on thee, world without end, And feast on thy ravishing love?

Nor sorrow, nor sickness, nor pain, Nor sin, nor temptation, nor fear, Shall ever molest me again: Perfection of glory reigns there; This soul and this body shall shine In robes of salvation and praise, And banquet on pleasures Divine, Where God his full beauty displays.

Ye palaces, sceptres, and crowns,
Your pride with disdain I survey;
Your pomps are but shadows and sounds,
And pass in a moment away:
The crown that my Saviour bestows
Yon permanent sun shall outshine;
My joy everlastingly flows:
My God, my Redeemer, is mine.

GOD'S LOVE DISINTERESTED.

OD could do without sinners. For himself, it was not necessary that he should save them: he was infinitely above the possibility of wanting anything from the hands of any created being. He was supremely glorious and happy; but, in the counsels of eternity, it was determined that Christ should make "his soul an offering for sin:" "while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly."

All things were created by him: he had only to speak, and it was done. The universe rose at his bidding: "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him." If

man fell, he could spare him; but he preferred to reinstate him: he chose to show his mercy and display his power in saving him, though so guilty and unworthy.

It was his delight to pluck sinners from the everlasting burnings, from the jaws of destruction. It was his delight to be the friend of the friendless, the helper of the feeble and lost. He rejoiced, and he rejoices still, to show mercy, and to love with an everlasting love all who repent and believe on his name. He makes it his glory and delight to pardon the guilty, to accept and sanctify the sinful, to hold up the faltering and the weak, to encourage the contrite and fearful, to speak peace to the troubled conscience, to throw heaven's light over the track in which sinners travel to eternity, to dispel all clouds and darkness from the mind, and to shine forth as the sun of righteousness in all his ineffable glory and splendour.

"Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us." What everlasting admiration should be excited in us, to think that God should think of us after we had rebelled so much against him! Well may we ask the question, What did the Lord see in us that he should send his Son to die for us, that he should prepare a

glorious state of rest for us, that he should condescend to notice us, who are poor, diseased, wretched creatures, that he should clothe us in the brightness of his glory, and give us at last a crown of honour and eternal glory? Such love is disinterested: it is beyond description! Take courage, all ye saints who are fearful, lest you mistake your way, lest you faint by the way: your God is a God of infinite love. Amid all our anxious, wavering, undecided thoughts, he urges us to trust and not be afraid; he says, "Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward;" and again, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them" (Isa. xlii. 16). We must believe these precious promises, and then we shall be really happy; we must try to be the subjects of the same kind of faith that a farmer possessed of whom I once read.

A king of Sweden was under great impressions of spiritual religion for some time before his death. A peasant being once, on a particular occasion, admitted to his presence, the king, knowing him to be a person of singular piety,

asked him what he took to be the true nature of Faith. The peasant entered deeply into the subject, and much to the king's comfort and satisfaction. The king, at last, lying on his death-bed, had a return of his doubts and fears as to the safety of his soul; and still the same question was perpetually in his mouth, to those about him, "What is real faith?" His attendants advised him to send for the Archbishop of Upsal; who, coming to the king's bedside, began, in a learned, logical manner, to enter into the scholastic definition of faith. The prelate's disquisition lasted an hour. When he had done, the king said, with much energy, "All this is ingenious, but not comfortable; it is not what I want. Nothing, after all, but the farmer's faith will do for me."

The more faith we possess, and the more prayerful we become, the more shall we rightly estimate and understand the disinterestedness of God's love towards us. Faith and prayer are exercises more natural and beneficial to believers in cases of extremity than any others; the following is an illustration:—

Mr. Alexander Peden, a Scotch Covenanter, with some others, had been, at one time, pursued both by horse and foot for a considerable

way. At last, getting some little distance between them and their persecutors, he stood still and said, "Let us pray here; for if the Lord hear not our prayer, and save us, we are all dead men." He then prayed, saying, "O Lord, this is the hour and power of thine enemies: they may not be idle. But hast thou no other work for them than to send them after us? Send them after them to whom thou wilt gi'e strength to flee; for our strength is gane. Twine them about the hill, O Lord, and cast the lap of thy cloak over puir auld Saunders, and thir puir things, and save us this ae time; and we will keep it in remembrance, and tell to the commendation of thy guidness, thy pity, and compassion, what thou didst for us at sic a time." And in this he was heard; for a cloud of mist immediately intervened between them and their persecutors; and in the meantime orders came to go in quest of James Renwick, and a great company with him.

It may serve to aid our correct appreciation of the love of God if we explain it in respect to its objects. God had no complacency in men. He could not have: all were sinners. They had broken his law, and all the evil of their subsequent experiences in sin had only wedded

them more and more to its perpetration. You will search the Bible in vain for the idea, or any resemblance to the idea, that God loved us because of any excellence in our character. No such idea is there. Bible theology constantly maintains that human nature is fallen and vile. With equal clearness does it affirm man's guilt as that he deserves punishment, and man's sinfulness as much as his love for the very sin which renders him guilty. In his natural heart there is not a single quality to commend him to the love of God. It would be very different with him if he had perpetrated his offence only in some moment of weakness, or by some sudden surprise, and, after finding out his evil, mourned over it and turned from its continued perpetration. It would be very different with him if he had only fallen into sin, and so become justly liable to punishment, but, after exexperience in it, were unwilling to continue in it any longer. But it is not so with him. He has the double evil of bad doings and bad disposition. He has first flung away his felicity, and then hated what would restore it.

Such is man's natural condition, and such his character. He is depraved—an alien and an enemy of God. The love, therefore, which God

bore to him was not the love of complacency, but of good-will; it was not the love of delight and approval, but the love of kindness. There was nothing in man, in all his moral aspects and deservings, which God could delight in. He was a guilty and vile sinner. He had departed from God, and did not wish to return. All his emotions were unholy, and therefore there was nothing in him to draw forth the complacency of the Divine mind, or prompt to

God's redeeming plan.

The doctrine of human depravity has been called gloomy and dreadful. Aside from the Gospel, so it is. And unbelievers under the Gospel (simply because they were unbelievers) have recoiled from coming down to the humble place it assigns to them. But with the Gospel, if our hearts will only believe it, this truth about our entire depravity has a most glorious bearing. It helps to explain to us the love of God. He did not love us because we deserved it. did not love us because he saw among the defilements of our character some lingering traces of holiness, some spots of light and promise, which brought him to our relief. If he had, and for purposes of reconciliation had offered us pardon, and had brought into exercise the good qualities he had discovered in our hearts, we will not say such a deed would not have been noble, but we will say that it would have been immeasurably beneath the dignity and the adorable wonders of the plan we contemplate. God loved us in our depravity, in our entire depravity: this proved his love to be disinterested.

All that God has done for mankind has been perfectly disinterested. Man is so poor that he cannot recompense the Almighty for the manifestation of his great love. God is rich, and man is poor; but man may have all riches in Christ, "whom God hath appointed heir of all things." Jesus Christ hath the greatest worth and wealth in himself; as the worth and value of many pieces of silver is in one piece of gold, so all the heavenly excellences that are scattered abroad in angels and men are united in Christ: yea, all the whole volume of perfection which is spread through heaven and earth is epitomized in Christ. A saint may have nothing in himself, but all things in Christ. If Christ be so rich then, sit down and wonder at his condescending love, that one so rich should fall in love with the poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked; that one so high should look so low as to notice

us: that one so great, that one who is the Lord and Heir of all, should love us, who have nothing lovely about us. Oh, the breadth, the length, the depth, the height of Christ's love for us, who had neither external nor internal worth, that might, in the least, draw his love towards us! We are indebted to God for the clothes we wear, for the bread we eat, for the houses we live in, the air we breathe, the beds we lie on, the ground we tread on. Now for Christ to love such poor beings! oh, how should this influence us to spend our days in admiring and contemplating his kindness and goodness! I have read a story of an elephant that, having fallen and being unable to help himself or get up again by reason of the inflexibleness of his legs, was helped up by a forester coming past, whereupon the elephant, by the instinct of nature, was so affected that he followed this man, would do anything for him, and never left him till his dving day. Let us profit by this circumstance, and make the best application of it that we can. If Christ in God is so rich, let us prize him above all, as the people prized David above themselves, saying, "Thou art worth ten thousand of us" (2 Saml. xviii. 3). So should believers exalt Jesus Christ above themselves.

He that sets not Christ above all is not a disciple of Christ. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26). No one truly loves Christ who loves anything more than Christ. It was a notable saying of Jerome: "If my father should hang upon me, my brethren should press round me, and my mother should stand before me, I would throw down my father, I would break through my brethren, and I would trample upon my mother, to come to Christ." Other saints have exalted Christ above all their lands, relations, and lives, as you may see in Hebrews xi. And so did a multitude of the martyrs under the ten persecutions. As Pharaoh set Joseph above all, and made him governor of the land, and as Darius set Daniel over all, so we must prize Christ and set Him above all. He has shed his precious blood for us; he has suffered and died for us; and therefore we cannot do too much, yea, we can never do enough for him. His love has been characterized by perfect and surpassing disinterestedness towards the family of mankind. If you and I, dear reader, are duly impressed with the love of God in Christ Jesus,

we shall humble ourselves in the dust, and feel most happy when holding communion with our Father in heaven. If you and I are sensible of our unworthiness, we shall devoutly and solemnly pray thus:—

Eternal and ever-blessed God! I desire to present myself before thee, with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul; sensible how unworthy such a sinful worm is to appear before the Holy Majesty of heaven, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and especially on such an occasion as this, even to enter into a covenant transaction with thee. But the scheme and plan are thine own. Thine infinite condescension hath offered it by thy Son, and thy grace hath inclined my heart to accept of it.

I come, therefore, acknowledging myself to have been a great offender; smiting on my breast, and saying, with the humble publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" I come, invited by the name of thy Son, and wholly trusting in his perfect righteousness, entreating that for his sake thou wilt be merciful to my unrighteousness, and wilt no more remember my sins. Receive, I beseech thee, thy revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to

him, and who desires nothing so much as that he may be thine!

This day do I, with the utmost solemnity, surrender myself to thee. I renounce all former lords that have had dominion over me, and I consecrate to thee all that I am, and all that I have: the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my worldly possessions, my time, and my influence over others; to be all used entirely for thy glory, and resolutely employed in obedience to thy commands, as long as thou continuest me in life; with an ardent desire and humble resolution to continue thine, through all the endless ages of eternity; ever holding myself in an attentive posture to observe the first intimations of thy will, and ready to spring forward, with zeal and joy, to the immediate execution of it.

To thy direction also I resign myself, and all I am and have, to be disposed of by thee in such a manner as thou shalt, in thine infinite wisdom, judge most subservient to the purposes of thy glory. To thee I leave the management of all events, and say without reserve, Not my will, but thine be done; rejoicing with a loyal heart in thine unlimited government, which ought to be the delight of the whole rational creation.

Use me, O Lord, I beseech thee, as an instrument for thy service! Number me among thy peculiar people! Let me be washed in the blood of thy dear Son! Let me be clothed with his righteousness! Let me be sanctified by his Spirit! Transform me more and more into his image! Impart to me, through him, all needful influences of thy purifying, cheering, and comforting Spirit! And let my life be spent under those influences, and in the light of thy gracious countenance, as my Father and my God!

And, when the solemn hour of death comes, may I remember this thy covenant, well ordered in all things and sure, as all my salvation, and all my desire, though every other hope and enjoyment are perishing; and do thou, O Lord, remember it too! Look down with pity, O my heavenly Father, on thy languishing, dying child! Embrace me in thine everlasting arms! Put strength and confidence into my departing spirit, and receive it to the abodes of them that sleep in Jesus, peacefully and joyfully to wait the accomplishment of thy great promise to all thy people, even that of a glorious resurrection, and of eternal happiness in thine heavenly presence! And, if any surviving friend should, when I am in the dust, meet with this memorial of my

solemn transactions with thee, may he make the engagement his own; and do thou graciously admit him to partake in all the blessings of thy covenant, through Jesus the great Mediator of it; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thy Holy Spirit, be everlasting praises ascribed by all the millions who are thus saved by thee, and by all those other celestial spirits in whose work and blessedness thou shalt call them to share! Amen,

Let us seek the favour of God, and we shall be fully satisfied and abundantly rewarded. Our language should be—

ETERNAL God, of beings first,
Of all created good the spring,
For thee I long, for thee I thirst,
My Love, my Saviour, and my King!
Thine is a never-failing store:
If God be mine, I ask no more.

The fairest world of light on high
Reflection makes but faint of thine;
The glorious tenants of the sky
In God's own beams transported shine;
But, shouldst thou wrap thy face in shade,
Soon all their life and lustre fade.

Thy presence makes celestial day,
And fills each raptured soul with bliss;
Night would prevail were God away,
And spirits pine in Paradise!
In vain would all the angels try
To fill thy room, thy lack supply.

And, sure, from heaven we turn our eyes
In vain to seek for bliss below;
The tree of Life can't root nor rise,
Nor in this blasted region grow:
The wealth of this poor barren clod
Can ne'er make up the want of God.

But, Lord, in thee the thirsty soul
Will meet with full, with rich supplies!
Thy smiles will all her fears control,
Thy beauties feast her ravish'd eyes:
To failing flesh and fainting hearts
Thy favour life and strength imparts!

GOD'S LOVE SOVEREIGN.

"OD is love." What a blessed declaration for you, dear reader, for me, and all who are truly sorry for sin, all who are conscious of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the justice, holiness, and purity of God! no sound more sweet, no thought more precious to the believer than this. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

God loves us if we love Jesus. He will love us to the end. From the bed of death he will transport us home to a sinless heaven; and after our tears, and trials, and conflicts, it shall be told, amid the hallelujahs of the upper sanctuary, "These are they which have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Let us pause for a moment, and think of the love of Christ. What has it done? It brought him from heaven; it bore him through a life of sorrows; it nailed him to the cross; and it has secured eternal happiness for all who believe in him to the saving of their souls.

The love of God in Christ is free and sovereign. The love of God was infinitely free and sovereign; it was from the beginning one of the promptings of his own nature. If we look for the cause of it in man, we shall look in vain: there was nothing in the lost race of sinners to furnish any claim to his favour: punishment was justly due, and most righteously called for by man's transgression and disobedience.

Man's sin was so great that God would have been righteous if he had inflicted the most severe chastisement upon the whole fallen race; the glories of the Godhead would have been for ever untarnished; not an angel in heaven would have wondered, after seeing the dreadful rebellion of this world, if God had turned his face for ever against man, and consigned every one, without distinction, to eternal torments: God was under no obligation to save us. The race

was guilty, the race was lost; lost to holiness, lost to hope, lost to happiness: no extent of suffering they might undergo could save them: there was no way in which the sinner could make expiation for the transgression.

Not all the angels in heaven could have saved man: there was but one among the angelic host who could rescue him from his impending doom. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father, ran to our relief: this Jesus Christ, this king of ineffable glory, looked with pity and compassion on the race of mankind, who were sunk so miserably low by the fall; when there was no eye to pity and no arm to save, his arm brought salvation: he suffered the penalty of the law. He suffered, the just for the unjust; he gave his life freely to ransom man from the power of death and the grave. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Thus we see clearly that God was under no obligation to save mankind; and that he saves entirely in consequence of his infinite free and sovereign grace. Scripture shows that we may be saved, and that we may have assurance of salvation in our own minds; for this we should labour when it tells us so

frequently that the saints before us have known their justification and future salvation; when it declares that whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life, which it would be in vain to declare if we cannot know ourselves to be believers or not; when it makes such a wide difference between the children of God and the children of the Devil; when it bids us give diligence to make our calling and election sure, and earnestly urges us to examine, prove, know our own selves, whether we be in the faith, and whether Jesus Christ be in us, except we be reprobates; and when its precepts require us to rejoice always to call God our Father, to live in his praises, to love Christ's appearing, to wish that he may come quickly, and to comfort ourselves with the mention of it. No one can do these things heartily unless he is a child of God. Let us ask ourselves whether we are the children of God; whether we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood; whether we are interested in the sovereignty and freeness of God's love; whether we have heard the voice of infinite mercy saying, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isa. xliii. 25).

We remember the sins and failings of others; we yield to our evil natures, and say we forgive, but cannot forget: God does both. He who has been insulted and dishonoured by us for years offers us free pardon and entire forgiveness on condition of true penitence. He says, "Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven." Though scarlet sins, though crimson sins, I forgive you all, "for mine own sake." "Thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake." Unspeakably happy are all those who are justified by the grace of the Lord Jesus, who hear the sweet voice of mercy saying, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (Isa. xliv. 22). God is ready and willing to pardon all our sins for Jesus' sake. The invitation is a world-wide one, "Come; for all things are now ready" (Luke xiv. 17). Free and sovereign grace asks this question, Are all things ready, and are we unready? God is ready to pardon all that we have done against him, if we ask him. Though we have been prodigals, and run away from God, and remained away so long, he is ready to meet us and

embrace us in his arms, if we return. Even the most wretched, the most vile, the most wicked, may find God ready to bid them welcome, if they will but come to the throne of grace in the divinely appointed way. If we have hearts of flesh, and not of stone, they should melt when we think of the infinite compassion of God our Saviour. Shall the Majesty of Heaven wait for our returning, and be ready to receive us who have abused him and forgotten him so long? Shall he delight in our conversion who might at any time glorify his justice in our damnation? and yet does it not melt our hearts within us, and are we not ready to come in to the fold to be reconciled to God? Have we not as much reason to come to God as he has to invite us? Christ has done his part on the cross, and made such a way for us to the Father that on his account we are welcome. The Lord will receive us into the glory of his saints if we have been the vilest of the vile; if we come to the fountain to be cleansed, we may have a place before his throne: his angels will be ready to guard our souls to the place of joy, if we do but humbly approach the mercy-seat. God is ready, the sacrifice of Christ is ready, and free, unmerited pardon is ready. What joyful news is this! how should the hearts of all leap for joy when we think of the free and sovereign love of God! The following remark upon the love of God is very striking and beautiful:—

A missionary, addressing a pious negro woman, said, "Mary, is not the love of God wonderful?" and then, enlarging on its manifestation in the atonement of Christ, he made the appeal, "Is it not wonderful?" Mary simply, but, I may add, sublimely, replied, "Massa, massa, me no tink it so wonderful, 'cause it is just like Him."

No one can merit salvation; we may try every way to do something meritorious of ourselves, but all will be in vain. God's gifts are free; they are without money and without price; the glad tidings of salvation are as free as the air we breathe. They are alike suitable to all classes and all climes. The savage has been gladdened by the sound of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. The following is a striking illustration:—

Mr. Nott, missionary in the South Sea Islands, was on one occasion reading a portion of the gospel of John to a number of the natives. When he had finished the sixteenth verse of the third chapter, a native, who had listened with

avidity and joy to the words, interrupted him, and said, "What words were those you read? What sounds were those I heard? Let me hear those words again!" Mr. Nott read again the verse, "God so loved," &c., when the native rose from his seat, and said, "Is that true? Can that be true? God love the world, when the world not love him! God so love the world as to give his Son to die that man might not die! Can that be true?" Mr. Nott again read the verse, "God so loved the world," &c., told him it was true, and that it was the message God had sent to them, and that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but be happy after death. The overwhelming feelings of the wondering native were too powerful for expression or restraint. He burst into tears; and, as these chased each other down his countenance, he retired to meditate in private on the great love of God which had that day touched his soul. There is every reason to believe he afterwards enjoyed the peace and happiness resulting from the love of God shed abroad in his heart.

We all ought to be filled with joy like the poor savage when he heard that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; if we are truly Christians, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable; if we are Israelites indeed, we are enlightened to discern the loveliness of God, and so believe the glory that is to be had with God: our hearts will be more set upon this than upon anything in this world. We would rather see the face of God, and live in his everlasting love, than have all the wealth or pleasure of this world; we see that all things else are vanity, and that nothing but God can fill the soul. Heavenly felicity is dearer to us than fleshly prosperity.

LET us love, and sing, and wonder;
Let us praise the Saviour's name!
He has hush'd the law's loud thunder;
He has quenched Mount Sinai's flame;
He has wash'd us with his blood;
He has brought us nigh to God.

Let us *love* the Lord who bought us,
Pitied us when enemies,
Call'd us by his grace, and taught us,
Gave us ears, and gave us eyes:
He has wash'd us with his blood;
He presents our souls to God,

Let us *sing*, though fierce temptation
Threaten hard to bear us down;
For the Lord, our strong salvation,
Holds in view the conqueror's crown:
He who wash'd us with his blood
Soon will bring us home to God.

Let us wonder: grace and justice
Join, and point to mercy's store;
When through grace in Christ our trust is,
Justice smiles, and asks no more:
He who wash'd us with his blood
Has secured our way to God.

Let us *praise*, and join the chorus
Of the saints enthroned on high.
Here they trusted him before us:
Now their praises fill the sky:
"Thou hast wash'd us with thy blood;
Thou art worthy, Lamb of God!"

Hark! the name of Jesus sounded
Loud from golden harps above!
Lord, we blush, and are confounded;
Faint our praises, cold our love!
Wash our souls and songs with blood,
For by thee we come to God.

GOD'S LOVE BENEVOLENT.

OD "gave his only begotten Son" to die J for us. Every believer can say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). The Father gives the Son, and the Son gives himself. He loved me and gave himself for me; all that Christ did and suffered was for me; all that Christ hath is mine. O soul! Christ's love is thine to pity thee, Christ's mercy is thine to save thee, Christ's graces are thine to beautify thee, and his glory is thine to crown thee; Christ's power is thine to protect thee: thou seest that he that is sure of God's love to him is sure of God's power for him; and Christ's wisdom is thine to counsel thee, and his angels are thine to guard thee, and his Spirit is thine to comfort thee, and his word is thine to teach thee. There are

four attributes of God which are of great support to Christians: his faithfulness, his mightiness, his goodness, and his wisdom.

It is our duty to live upon promises while providences seem to run cross. God's love is still free love; all that he hath given us is free: his grace is free, his love is free, his salvation is free, and he himself is free. A drachm of grace in the heart is better than a chain of gold about the neck. All that God in Christ has bestowed upon us is free, and therefore his love is benevolent.

All true Christians will possess something of the spirit of their heavenly Father—the spirit of benevolence; they will not say to their neighbours in word only, but in deed, "Be benevolent; do good with your substance:" they will set the example. This is the sort of Christianity God approves, and all other is spurious; we must practise as well as preach—so thought the excellent Rev. Mr. Kelly, of the town of Ayr, who once preached an excellent sermon from the parable of the man who fell among thieves. He was particularly severe on the conduct of the priest, who saw him and ministered not unto him, but passed by on the other side; and, in an animated and pathetic flow of elo-

quence, he exclaimed, "What! not even the servant of the Almighty! he whose tongue was engaged in the work of charity, whose bosom was appointed the seat of brotherly love, whose heart the emblem of pity—did he refuse to stretch forth his hand and to take the mantle from his shoulders to cover the nakedness of woe? If he refused, if the sheperd himself went astray, was it to be wondered at that the flock followed?' Such were the precepts of the preacher; and he practised what he preached. .The next day, when the river was much increased, a boy was swept overboard from a small boat by the force of the current. A great concourse of people were assembled, but none of them attempted to save the boy, when Mr. Kelly threw himself from his chamber window into the current, and, at the hazard of his own life, saved that of the boy.

God's language is "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3). None are so kind, none so benevolent as God to his children; he is always thinking of them, he is ever caring for and protecting them; he sets his heart upon them in order to magnify them, to raise them from despondency and

gloom to holy communion and fellowship with himself. How true the declaration, and how joyous to you and me, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (I John iv. 16). The feeling of our souls should be, Oh that I could love God more: to love him is both work and wages. What a great favour is it that God will give us leave to love him; that he will return love for love ten thousand fold!

God has loved you, dear reader, with a benevolent and everlasting love; if you have inward peace and joy, do not therefore be surprised if you are called to make great sacrifices for the name's sake of the Son of God: there are many reasons why you should make sacrifices. Remember for whom they are made. For whom? For him who built the fabric of the universe, and over whose wondrous creation the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouled for joy." For whom? For him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," in whom "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." For whom? For him "who was rich, but for your sakes became poor, that through his poverty you might be rich." For whom? For him who on your behalf became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and who said of himself, in the humiliation he bore to save you, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." For whom? For him whose sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane; who was mocked, and buffeted, and spit upon in the judgment-hall; who bore the full weight and curse of your sins upon the cross; who there cried, in the last awful desertion, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and then, amidst the convulsive heavings of nature, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost!

Oh, when you thus contemplate the sublime mystery of your redemption, and look on him who, by the might and mercy of his own arm, snatched your immortal soul from the deep perdition of hell, surely you will exclaim—

"Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all!"

Remember for what these sacrifices are made. They are made for the enjoyment of peace of conscience. They are made for a restoration to the image and the friendship of God. They are made for the refinement and ennobling of

the nature. They are made that the clouds and darkness which hang over the prospects of futurity may be dispersed; that the lively hope may be given of an immortal inheritance; that the soul may be saved with an everlasting salvation. If still you be inclined to hesitate, enter into the spirit of the solemn question, and ponder it well: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" You must make worldly profit and pleasure subservient to the favour of God and the interests of your soul. It is certain that man, in most cases, is influenced in conduct by the prospect of reward: it is a tendency which enters essentially into his nature. True religion makes use of the same excitement to animate and impress the heart; and, though its recompenses are bestowed, not from any desert by which human actions are dignified, but from unmingled and sovereign mercy, yet man is urged to proceed in the path of piety by a sight of the glory which shall follow. Thus we are told that God will "render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Romans ii. 6,7). Thus Moses had "respect to the recompense of reward" (Hebrews xi. 26). And thus the Saviour himself, amidst the sad endurances of his humiliation, considered "the joy that was set before him" (Hebrews xii. 2). We ask what shall be our reward, and the answer is a crown of eternal glory.

Let us ask ourselves, before we proceed further, whether we estimate rightly the benevolence of God's love. We are entirely dependent on him for all temporal and spiritual mercies; we cannot live a day or an hour without being under obligation to the goodness of God: do we think sufficiently about our helplessness apart from him? If so, we shall never cease to praise and adore him for his infinite love. God's love is so benevolent that he will help the repenting sinner to see how sinful he has been in departing from the living God; he will convince him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; he will show him how he may be saved and blessed for ever. Well would it be for every doubting, trembling sinner to present such a prayer as the following, until he obtains complete and full assurance :-

Convince me, O thou blessed Spirit, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Show me that I am undone, but that my help is found

in God alone, in God through Christ, for whom alone he will extend compassion and help to me! According to thy peculiar office, "take of Christ, and show it unto me!" Show me his power to save! Show me his willingness to exert that power! Teach my faith to behold him as extended on the cross with open arms, with a pierced, bleeding side, and so telling me, in the most forcible language, what room there is in his very heart for me! May I know what it is to have my whole heart subdued by love; so subdued as to be "crucified with him," as to be dead to sin, and dead to the world, "but alive unto God through Jesus Christ!" In his power and love may I confide! To him may I without any reserve commit my spirit! His image may I bear! His laws may I observe! His service may I pursue! And may I remain through time and eternity a monument of the efficacy of the Gospel, and a trophy of his victorious grace!

O blessed God! if there be anything wanting towards constituting me a sincere Christian, discover it to me, and work it in me! Beat down, I beseech thee, every false and presumptuous hope, how costly soever that building may have been which is thus laid in ruins, and

how proud soever I may have been of its vain ornaments! Let me know the worst of my case, be that knowledge ever so distressful; and, if there be remaining danger, O let my heart be fully sensible of it, sensible while yet there is remedy.

If there be any secret sin yet lurking in my soul which I have not sincerely renounced, discover it to me, and rend it out of my heart, though it should have shot its roots ever so deep, and should have wrapped them all around, so that every nerve should be pained by its separation! Tear it away, O Lord, by a hand graciously severe! and by degrees, yea, Lord, by speedy advances, go on, I beseech thee, to perfect what is still lacking in my faith! Accomplish in me "all the good pleasure of thy goodness;" enrich me, O heavenly Father, with all the graces of thy Spirit; form me to the complete image of thy dear Son; and then, for his sake, come unto me, and manifest thy gracious presence in my soul, till it is ripened for that state of glory for which all these operations are intended to prepare it.

Come, Holy Ghost, inspire my song
With thy immortal flame,
And teach my heart, and teach my tongue,
The Saviour's lovely name.

The Saviour! O what endless charms
Dwell in the blissful sound!
Its influence ev'ry fear disarms,
And spreads sweet comfort round.

Here pardon, life, and joys divine In rich effusion flow, For guilty rebels lost by sin, And doom'd to endless woe.

God's only Son (stupendous grace!)
Forsook his throne above;
And, swift to save our wretched race,
He flew on wings of love.

The almighty Former of the skies
Stoop'd to our vile abode;
While angels view'd with wond'ring eyes
And hail'd th' incarnate God,

O the rich depths of love Divine!
Of bliss a boundless store:
Dear Saviour, let me call thee mine:
I cannot wish for more.

On thee alone my hope relies, Beneath thy cross I fall; My Lord, my life, my sacrifice, My Saviour, and my all.

GOD'S LOVE PARDONING.

/E are all sinners: we all need pardon for sin; and God gives it to us: we have sold ourselves to sin and Satan, and naturally we are bound under the law: we are slaves, but Christ offers us redemption; he has bought us with his most precious blood: we are condemned by the law, but pardoned and saved by grace. Christ is willing to bestow his best blessings upon the worst sinners. How encouraging that text to us all: "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Psa. lxviii. 18). Christ has received gifts, as a steward, from the hand of the Father, to dispense them among men; yea, among the rebellious, the worst of men. No one need despair; Christ even entreats the sinner to receive him: what infinite condescension on his part! "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: I that have heaven to give, and peace to give, and pardon to give, and grace to give, and myself to give: I that have tried gold to enrich you, and white raiment to clothe you, and eye-salve to anoint you; I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open the door." Let him be ever so guilty, ever so filthy, ever so unworthy, "I will come in and sup with him, and he with me."

Lord, at whose door dost thou stand knocking? Is it at the rich man's door? or at the righteous man's door? or at the humble man's door? or at the weary and heavy-laden man's door? or at the mourner's door? or at the, qualified or prepared man's door? No, says Christ: it is at none of these doors. At whose, then, O blessed Lord? At the lukewarm Laodicean's door: at the doors of those who are neither hot nor cold, but wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. These, says Christ, are the worst of the worst; and yet, if any of these wretches, these monsters of mankind, will open the door, I will come in and will sup with them, and they with me.

I have read a remarkable story of a great rebel who had raised a mighty party against a Roman emperor. The emperor, being much provoked and stirred in spirit, thereby made a proclamation that whosoever brought in the rebel, dead or alive, should have a great sum of money. The rebel, hearing of this, comes and presents himself to the emperor, and demanded of him the sum of money. Whereupon the emperor reasons thus: "If I should now cut him off, the world would say I did it to save the money;" and so he pardoned him and gave him the great sum of money, notwithstanding all his former rebellion. Shall a heathen emperor do thus to a rebel that was in arms against him, and will not God do as much for poor rebellious sinners? Surely he will. What though we have been in arms against God and mustered up all the strength and force we could, even all the members of our body and faculties of our soul against God, and Christ, and holiness? Yet we know that the King of Israel is a merciful King: he is a God of pardons: he delights to make his grace glorious, and therefore is very willing to show mercy to the greatest rebels, to the vilest and worst of sinners. The greatness of man's sin sets off the riches of free grace: sins

are debts; and God can as easily blot out a debt of many millions as he can a less debt: therefore let not the greatest rebel despair, but believe, and he shall find that, where sin has abounded, there grace shall superabound. We have only to ask and receive all blessings which God is able to bestow, even life for evermore. We may be among the chosen and peculiar people of the Lord, if we seek the forgiveness of all our sins in the divinely appointed way. God has given to his dear Son a people according to the election of grace: they are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood: they were given unto him as a charge to keep, and he undertook to keep them safely and for ever: they were given to him as a reward for his work; and he prizes them as the jewels of his crown: they were given to him to be his bride and social companion, to possess and enjoy for ever: as a charge they are his care, as a reward they are his honour, and as a bride they are his delight. The whole Church should never cease praising such a Saviour and Redeemer as God has provided for them and us. He came from the bosom of the Father, and perfectly knew his mind, and was in the best capacity to reveal it. As

the sun, as soon as it is risen, begins to shine, so Christ, as soon as he entered on his public ministry, began to enlighten the world with his doctrine. As the law was given at Mount Sinai, so Christ delivered his doctrines, full of blessings and not curses, to a multitude on a mountain (Matt. v. vi. vii.) When he preached, he did not teach as the scribes, but he taught as one having authority; so that his hearers were astonished at his doctrine. He did not reveal the mind and will of God in the style of the prophets, "Thus saith the Lord," but "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He delivered his doctrines, not only as the doctrines of the Father, but as his own; he gave forth his commandments, not as the prophets were wont to do, merely as God commands, but as his own: "This is my commandment:" "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John xv. 12, 14). With the same authority, the divine and blessed Redeemer says to every poor trembling sinner, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. xi. 28,

29, 30). These words are spoken to you and to me, dear reader; let us take encouragement therefrom, and let all who are convinced about the importance of seeking the salvation of their souls, but who are delaying this important matter, pray thus at the throne of the heavenly grace:—

O thou righteous and holy Sovereign of heaven and earth! thou "God, in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways!" I confess I have been far from glorifying thee, or conducting myself according to the intimations or the declarations of thy will. I have, therefore, reason to adore thy forbearance and goodness, that thou hast not long since stopped my breath, and cut me off from the land of the living. I adore thy patience, that I have not, months and years ago, been an inhabitant of hell, where ten thousand delaying sinners are now lamenting their folly, and will be lamenting it for ever. But, O God! how possible is it that this trifling heart of mine may, at length, betray me into the same ruin! and then, alas! into a ruin aggravated by all this patience and forbearance of thine! I am convinced that, sooner or later, religion must be my serious care, or I am undone. And yet

my foolish heart draws back from the yoke; yet I stretch myself upon the bed of sloth, and cry out for "a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." Thus does my corrupt heart plead for its own indulgence against the convictions of my better judgment. What shall I say? O Lord, save me from myself! Save me from the artifices and deceitfulness of sin! Save me from the treachery of this perverse and degenerate nature of mine, and fix upon my mind what I have now been reading!

O Lord, I am not now instructed in truths which were before quite unknown. Often have I been warned of the uncertainty of life, and of the greater uncertainty of the day of salvation; and I have formed some light purposes, and have begun to take a few irresolute steps in my way towards a return to thee. But, alas! I have been only, as it were, fluttering about religion, and have never fixed upon it. All my resolutions have been scattered like smoke, or dispersed like a cloudy vapour before the wind. Oh that thou wouldst now bring these home to my heart, with a more powerful conviction than it hath ever yet felt! Oh that thou wouldst pursue me with them, even when I flee from

them! If I should ever grow mad enough to endeavour to escape them any more, may thy Spirit address me in the language of effectual terror! and add all the most powerful methods which thou knowest to be necessary, to awaken me from this lethargy, which must otherwise be mortal! May the sound of these things be in mine ears "when I go out, and when I come in, when I lie down, and when I rise up"! And if the repose of the night, and the business of the day, be for a while interrupted by the impression, be it so, O God! if I may but thereby carry on my business with thee to better purpose, and at length secure a repose in thee, instead of all that terror which I now find, when "I think upon God, and am troubled."

"O Lord! my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." I am afraid lest even now, when I have begun to think of religion, thou shouldst cut me off in this critical and important moment, before my thoughts grow to any ripeness, and blast, in eternal death, the first buddings and openings of it in my mind. But, oh, spare me, I earnestly entreat thee; for thy mercy's sake, spare me a little longer! It may be, through thy grace, I shall return. It may be, if thou continuest thy

patience towards me a while longer, there may be some better fruit produced by this cumberer of the ground. And may the remembrance of that long forbearance which thou hast already exercised towards me prevent my continuing to trifle with thee, and with my own soul! From this day, O Lord, from this hour, from this moment, may I be able to date more lasting impressions of religion than have ever yet been made upon my heart, by all that I have ever read, or all that I have heard! Amen.

God's love is pardoning and redeeming, and Christ says, for the encouragement of sinners, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Let us try and believe this, and his willingness to exercise this power in forgiving all our sins. Let the following incident strengthen our faith in the Saviour:-

A poor woman, at Berwick St. John, in Wiltshire, the wife of a day-labourer, being called by the grace of God, her husband became a bitter persecutor; and, because his wife would not relinquish the service of God, he frequently turned her out of doors in the night, and during the winter season. The wife, being a prudent woman, did not expose this cruelty to her

neighbours, but, on the contrary, to avoid their observations, she went into the adjacent fields, and betook herself to prayer. Greatly distressed, but not in despair, her only encouragement was, that with God all things are possible; she therefore resolved to set apart one hour every day to pray for the conversion of her persecuting husband. This she was enabled to do, without missing a single day, for a whole year. Seeing no change in her husband, she formed a second resolution to persevere six months longer, which she did up to the last day, when she retired at about twelve o'clock, as usual, and, as she thought, for the last time. Fearing that her wishes, in this instance, might be contrary to the will of God, she resolved to call no more upon him; her desire not being granted, her expectation appeared to be cut off. That same day her husband returned from his labour in a state of deep dejection, and, instead of sitting down as usual to his dinner, he proceeded directly to his chamber. His wife followed, and heard, to her grateful astonishment, that he who used to mock had returned to pray.

He came down-stairs, but refused to eat, and returned again to his labour until the evening.

When he came home, his wife affectionately asked him, "What is the matter?"

"Matter enough," said he: "I am a lost sinner. About twelve o'clock this morning," continued he, "I was at my work, and a passage of Scripture was deeply impressed upon my mind, which I cannot get rid of, and I am sure I am lost."

His wife encouraged him to pray, but he replied, "O wife, it is of no use: there is no forgiveness for me!" Smitten with remorse at the recollection of his former conduct, he said to her, "Will you forgive me?" She replied, "Oh, yes." "Will you pray for me?" "Oh, yes, that I will." "Will you pray for me now?" "That I will, with all my heart." They instantly fell on their knees and wept, and made supplication. His tears of penitence mingled with her tears of gratitude and joy. He became decidedly pious, and afterwards greatly exerted himself to make his neighbours acquainted with the way of salvation by Christ Jesus.

God offers pardon and redemption to you and to me, dear reader: he offers us these blessings freely: he knows we have not the least thing to give in return for them; that we are very poor, and he so very rich, that he

delights to enrich us. Are we pardoned? Are we redeemed? Allow me to speak plainly to you before you read any more of this book. Are you saved? Are you inquiring the way of salvation? May I consider you as coming to me with the inquiry which the Jews once addressed to our Lord: "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" What method shall I take to secure that redemption and salvation which I am told Christ has procured for his people? I would answer it as seriously and carefully as possible; as one that knows of what importance it is to you to be rightly informed, and that knows also how strictly he is to answer to God for the sincerity and care with which the reply is made. May I be enabled to speak as his oracle; that is, in such a manner as faithfully to echo back what the sacred oracles teach!

And here, that I may be sure to follow the safest guides, and the fairest examples, I must preach salvation to you, in the way of "repentance towards God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ:" that good old doctrine which the apostles preached, and which no man can pretend to change but at the peril of his own soul, and of theirs who give heed to him.

I suppose that you are by this time convinced of your guilt and condemnation, and of your own inability to recover yourself. Let me, nevertheless, urge you to foster that conviction yet more deeply, and to remember that you are undone, and that in yourself no help is to be found. Be persuaded, therefore, solemnly and sincerely, to give up all self-dependence; which, if not guarded against, will be ready to return secretly, before it be observed, and will lead you to attempt rebuilding what you have just been destroying.

Be assured that, if ever you are saved, you must ascribe that salvation entirely to the free grace of God. If, guilty and miserable as you are, you are not only accepted, but crowned, you must "lay down your crown" with all humble acknowledgment "before the throne." "No flesh must glory in his presence; but he that glorieth must glory in the Lord: for of him are we in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." And you must be sensible that, having none of these in yourself, you need them in another. You must know that you are ignorant and guilty, polluted and enslaved; or, as our Lord expresses it, with regard

to some who are under a Christian profession, that, as a sinner, "you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

If these views be deeply impressed upon your mind, you will be prepared to receive what I am nowabout to say. Hear, therefore, in a few words, your duty, your remedy, and your safety; which consist in this, that you must apply to Christ, with a deep abhorrence of your former sins, and a firm resolution of forsaking them; forming that resolution in the strength of his grace, and fixing your dependence on him, for your acceptance with God, even while you are purposing to do your very best, and when you have actually done the best you ever will do in consequence of that purpose.

The first and most important advice that I can give you, in your present circumstances, is, that you look to Christ and apply yourself to him. And here, "say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring him down to me?" or, Who shall raise me up thither, to present me before him? The blessed Jesus, by whom all things consist, by whom the whole system of them is supported, forgotten as he is by most that bear his name, is not far from any of us; nor could he have promised to be

"wherever two or three are met together in his name" but for those truly Divine perfections by which he is everywhere present. Would you, therefore, O sinner, desire to be saved? Go to the Saviour. Would you desire to be delivered? Look to that great Deliverer; and, though you should be so overwhelmed with guilt and shame, and fear, and horror, that you should be incapable of speaking to him, fall down in this speechless confusion at his feet, and behold him as "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world."

Behold him, therefore, with an attentive eye, and say whether the sight does not touch, and even melt thy very heart! Dost thou not feel what a foolish and what a wretched creature thou hast been, that, for the sake of such low and sordid gratifications and interests as those which thou hast been pursuing, thou shouldst thus "kill the Prince of Life"? Behold the deep wounds which he bore for thee, look on him whom thou hast pierced, and surely thou must mourn, unless thine heart be hardened into stone. Which of thy past sins canst thou reflect upon, and say, "For this it was worth my while thus to have injured my Saviour, and to have exposed the Son of God to sufferings!"

And what future temptations can be so strong that thou shouldst say, "For the sake of this I will crucify my Lord again"? Friend, thou must repent; thou must repent of every sin, and must forsake it; but, if thou dost it to any purpose, I well know it must be at the foot of the Cross. Thou must sacrifice every lust, even the dearest: though it should be like a right hand, or a right eye; and therefore, that thou mayst, if possible, be animated to it, I have led thee to that altar on which Christ himself was sacrificed for thee, "an offering of a sweet-smelling savour." Thou must "yield up thyself to God, as one alive from the dead;" and therefore I have showed thee at what a price he purchased thee: for "thou wast not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God, that Lamb without blemish and without spot. And now I would ask thee, as before the Lord, What dost thine own heart say to it? Art thou grieved for thy former offences? Art thou willing to forsake thy sins? Art thou willing to become the cheerful, thankful servant of him who hath purchased thee with his own blood?

I will suppose such a purpose as this rising in your mind. How effectual it may be, I know

not: nor what different views may arise hereafter, or how soon the present sense may wear off. But this I assuredly know, that thou wilt never see reason to change these views; for, however thou mayst alter, the Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And the necessity for repentance and faith will continue as long as the perfections of the blessed God are the same.

But, while you have these views and these purposes, I must remind you that this is not all that is necessary to your salvation. You must not only purpose, but, as God gives opportunity, you must act, as those who are convinced of the evil of sin, and of the necessity and excellence of holiness. And, that you may be enabled to do so in other instances, you must, in the first place, and as the first great work of God (as our Lord himself calls it), "believe on him whom God hath sent;" you must confide in him, must commit your soul into the hands of Christ, to be saved by him according to his own appointed method of salvation. This is the great act of saving faith; and I pray God that you may experimentally know what it means, so as to be able to say with the apostle Paul, in the near views of death itself, "I know

whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day"—that great decisive day, which, if we are Christians, we have always in view. To this I would urge you; and O that I could be so happy as to induce you to do it at once. Be assured, you must not turn immediately to God, as absolute, to the neglect of a Mediator. It will neither be acceptable to him, nor safe for you, to rush into his presence, without any regard to his own Son, whom he hath appointed to introduce sinners to him. And, if you come otherwise, you come as one who is not a sinner. The very manner of presenting the address will be interpreted as a denial of that guilt with which he knows you are chargeable; and therefore he will not admit you, nor so much as look upon you. And accordingly, our Lord, knowing how much every man living was concerned in this, says, in the most universal terms, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Turn, therefore, to this glorious Redeemer, as manifest in the blood which he shed upon the cross, and in the wounds which he received there. Go to him, O sinner! this day, this moment, with all thy sins about thee. Go just as thou

art; for, if thou wilt never apply to him till thou art first righteous and holy, thou wilt never be righteous and holy at all; nor canst be so on this supposition, unless there were some way of being so without him; and then there would be no occasion for applying to him for righteousness and holiness. It were indeed as if it should be said that a sick man should defer his application to a physician till his health is recovered. Let me, therefore, repeat it without offence: Go to him just as thou art, and say (O that thou mayst this moment be enabled to say it from thy very soul!), Blessed Jesus, I am surely one of the most sinful and one of the most miserable creatures that ever fell prostrate before thee; nevertheless, I come, because I have heard that thou didst once say, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I come, because I have heard that thou didst graciously say, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." O thou Prince of peace! O thou King of glory! I am a condemned, miserable sinner. I have ruined my own soul, and am condemned for ever, if thou dost not help me, and save me. I have broken thy Father's law, and thine; for thou art one with him. I

have deserved condemnation and wrath; and I am, even at this very moment, under a sentence of everlasting destruction—a destruction which will be aggravated by all the contempt which I have cast upon thee, O thou bleeding Lamb of God! for I cannot, and I will not, dissemble it before thee, that I have wronged thee, most basely and ungratefully wronged thee, under the character of a Saviour, as well as of a Lord. But now I am willing to submit to thee; and I have brought my poor trembling soul to place it in thine hands, if thou wilt condescend to receive it; and, if thou dost not, it must perish. O Lord, I lie at thy feet! stretch out "thy golden sceptre, that I may live!" Yea, if it please the King, let the life of my soul be given me at my petition! I have no treasure wherewith to purchase it; I have no equivalent to give thee for it; but, if that compassionate heart of thine can find pleasure in saving one of the most distressed creatures under heaven, that pleasure thou mayst here find. O Lord! I have foolishly attempted to be my own saviour; but it will not do. I am sensible the attempt is vain; and therefore I give it up, and look unto thee. On thee, blessed Jesus! who art sure and steadfast, do I desire to fix my

anchor. On thee, as the only sure foundation, would I build my eternal hopes. To thy teaching, O thou unerring prophet of the Lord, would I submit; be thy doctrines ever so mysterious, it is enough for me that from thee they have emanated. To thine atonement, obedience, and intercession, O thou holy and ever accessible High Priest, would I trust. And to thy government, O thou exalted Sovereign, would I yield a willing, delightful subjection. In token of reverence and love, "I kiss the Son;" and welcome thee with unutterable joy, to the throne in my heart. Ascend it, and reign there for ever! Subdue mine enemies, O Lord, for they are thine; and make me thy faithful and zealous servant: faithful to death, and zealous to eternity.

When at thy footstool, Lord, I bend,
And plead with thee for mercy there,
O think thou of the sinner's Friend,
And for his sake receive my prayer!
O think not of my shame and guilt,
My thousand stains of deepest dye:
Think of the blood which Jesus spilt,
And let that blood my pardon buy.

Think, Lord, how I am still thy own,
The trembling creature of thy hand;
Think how my heart to sin is prone,
And what temptations round me stand.
O think how blind and weak am I,
How strong and wily are my foes:
They wrestled with thy hosts on high;
How should a worm their might oppose?

O think upon thy holy word,
And every plighted promise there:
How prayer should evermore be heard,
And how thy glory is to spare.
O think not of my doubts and fears,
My strivings with thy grace divine:
Think upon Jesus' woes and tears,
And let his merits stand for mine.

Thine eye, thine ear, they are not dull;
Thine arm can never shortened be:
Behold me here—my heart is full—
Behold, and spare and succour me.
No claim, no merits, Lord, I plead:
I come a humbled helpless slave;
But, ah! the more my guilty need,
The more thy glory, Lord, to save.

Forgiveness with God is no effort: it is a delight. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake " (Isa. xlii. 21). God loves the weakest penitent sinner with redeeming love; he loves his people with the dearest, with the choicest, with the strongest love; therefore he gives them the best gifts. Christ does not love believers with a low, flat, dull, common love; with such a love as most men love one another with; but with a love that is like himself. Now men will give as · they love: "And Elkanah gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions; but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved her" (1 Saml. i. 4, 5). In the Hebrew it is, "He gave her a gift of the face;" that is, a great, an honourable gift. Men look upon great and honourable gifts with a sweet and cheerful countenance. So the gifts that Jesus Christ gives to believers are gifts of the face; that is, they are the greatest gifts, the most honourable gifts, the choicest gifts-gifts fit for none but a king to give. Augustus, in his solemn feasts, gave trifles to some, but gold to others. The Lord Jesus scatters the trifles of this world up and down; as Luther well speaks, the whole Turkish empire is but a crust that God throws to a dog. God scatters giftless gifts-viz., the honours, riches, and favours of this world-up and down, among the worst of men; but as for his gold, his Spirit, his grace, his Son, his favour-these are jewels that he only casts into the bosom of saints, and that because he dearly loves them. God is willing to give you and me a spiritual, glorious, and divine life—a life answerable to his greatness and grace. The terms of the Gospel bargain are God's free giving, and our free taking and receiving. Are we guilty? Christ is offered unto us for righteousness? Are we polluted? He is offered unto us for sanctification. Are we lost and miserable? He is made of God unto us complete redemption. Are we hardhearted? The Bible offers him in promise: "I will take away the heart of stone," &c. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26). We must come to Jesus just as we are, and he will receive us. No strict attention to numberless outward duties will ever save our souls. One of the best of men corroborates this statement by his own experience:-"I wasted and lost my young years. I had been religious, dutiful, and consistent; but it had been a mere going about to establish my own righteousness: for my system of service ignored the central fact of Divine revelation, that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Tim. i. 15). 'But God, who is rich in mercy' (Eph. ii. 4), had compassion on me, and, by the grace of his Holy Spirit, revealed his Son in me (Gal. i. 16), 'and turned the shadow of death into the morning' (Amos v. 8). The first gleam of Gospel light which entered my darkened mind was in reading a little tract in which Luther's conversion is referred to. When the words of the creed, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins,' were pronounced in his hearing, he took them up and repeated them on his bed of sickness; but he was told he must believe not only in the forgiveness of David's sins or Peter's sins, but that he must believe in the forgiveness of his own sins. This truth became the inlet of pardon and peace to his soul; and, on reading it, I felt that my soul was being visited with celestial light, and I was led to see that pardon of sin was a present and personal blessing; but I was not satisfied that I believed aright. Shortly after I was reading Romaine's 'Life of Faith,' and came upon this sentiment: that the weakest believer is as precious to Christ and as safe as the strongest. The day-spring from on high visited me; and by-and-by I felt myself bathed in the noontide radiance of heaven's

glorious light. The great Enlightener filled my soul with his transforming presence. He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness had shined in my heart, 'to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' I was conscious of a Divine presence within me, and believed that the holy light which had entered my soul came direct from Heaven. Christ from that moment became the great central object of my contemplation. Immediately that I became enlightened, Jesus appeared to be the centre sum and essence of revelation; and, with him as a key, I thought I could understand all that ever was written on the subject of religion. My spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour, and self and its services were thought of only to be condemned as utterly vile and worthless. Christ was all. And, as my soul was filled with Divine light, and glowing with the love of Jesus, I said to myself, as in amazement I remembered the dreary past, 'How could I have been so blind as not to see the way of salvation, when it is so clearly revealed that Jesus Christ is all and in all, and we are complete in him: not 'in him' and our own doings combined, but in him alone! The truth is as clear as the sun at noonday that Jesus is himself the sin-bearer and the Saviour: and I and my legal duties and conscientious penances are nothing but 'filthy rags.' I have read it a hundred times that Jesus came 'to seek and to save that which was lost;' and the same truth runs through the whole Word of God; and yet I never saw it until now. Oh, how blind I have been to the glory of Jesus! How sad to think that I have read so much about him with the veil upon my heart, and have never seen his glory as a Saviour till this blessed hour! I now wished that every one could see the Lord as I saw him. I wondered that they did not; and I thought I could point him out to them so clearly and distinctly as made of God unto us, 'wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that it would be impossible for them not to believe in him, receive him as theirs, and be filled with heavenly joy.' But I found that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon."

Dear reader, pause for a moment while I ask you if you are sufficiently concerned about the salvation of your precious immortal soul; if you have ever put searching questions to yourself; if you have asked the one and all-important question, "What must I do to be saved?" Now

is the hour for you seriously to ponder over these things: you must not presume upon future opportunities: you have no justifiable ground to suppose God will hear you, if you delay to sue for mercy: your last hour may be close at hand: another minute, and you may be in eternity: you cannot purchase a moment of time. "Millions of money for an inch of time!" cried Elizabeth, the gifted, but ambitious Queen of England, upon her dying bed. Unhappy woman! her time was come to die; and all her wealth could avail her nothing in that solemn hour. O sinner, think now, repent now, believe now, and "prepare to meet your God."

Happy, unspeakably happy, are all those who have secured the salvation of their immortal souls. They can say, Blessed Jesus, our highest aspirations are to see thee, be like thee; for even this will be honour enough, happiness enough, and heaven enough for us. To be holy as thou art holy meets our desires, but goes far beyond all we could have dared to think of. Look to Jesus, dear reader, for a contrite heart; look to Jesus for a clean heart; look to Jesus for a loving heart, and Jesus will give

you all. He is able to save you; he is willing to save you: come to him at once, come to him now, and all will be well for time and for eternity. Christ has "made peace by the blood of the cross" (Col. i. 20).

Great God of wonders! all thy ways
Are matchless, godlike, and divine;
But the fair glories of thy grace
More godlike and unrivall'd shine:
Who is a pardoning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

Crimes of such horror to forgive,
Such guilty daring worms to spare:
This is thy grand prerogative,
And none shall in the honour share:
Who is a pardoning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

Angels and men resign their claim
To pity, mercy, love, and grace:
These glories crown Jehovah's name
With an incomparable blaze:
Who is a pardoning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

In wonder lost, with trembling joy
We take the pardon of our God;
Pardon for crimes of deepest dye;
A pardon seal'd with Jesus' blood:
Who is a pardoning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

O may this strange, this matchless grace,
This godlike miracle of love,
Fill the wide earth with grateful praise,
And all th' angelic choirs above:
Who is a pardoning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

GOD'S LOVE JUSTIFYING.

THROUGH the death of Christ the believer is freed from the penalty of the law. Christ has paid the debt the sinner owed to Divine justice. The law could not free the transgressor, but the blood of Jesus could, and has for ever liberated all who believe in him.

"A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. ii. 16). No penitent sinner need fear that Christ cannot and will not pardon, receive, and justify him; "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever" (Rom. xi. 36.) The justification of a sinner is alone in Christ. This doctrine is so clearly and so repeatedly stated in the Word of God that nothing but the ignorance and pride of the

human heart can lead any to oppose it. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified." "This is the name whereby he shall be called the Lord our righteousness." "Christ is of God made unto us righteousness." "By him all that believe are justified from all things." "He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Invalidate this doctrine, and the Bible affords not a gleam of hope for a ruined sinner who is made truly sensible of his guilt and misery. It is useless to attempt to persuade him to do his best, and trust to mercy. He has a thousand arguments against such an hypothesis; and nothing but free, full, and irreversible justification through the righteousness of Immanuel could secure him from utter despair. Justification and sanctification are distinct blessings in the covenant of grace; but they are never separated in its economy. We cannot enjoy the comfort of justification till we possess the blessing of sanctification. The faith of the operation of God is a holy principle which purifies the heart; and, by the exercise of this principle, the mind not only perceives the righteousness of Christ, but is enabled to receive and rely thereupon as that which alone is the efficient cause

of justification. We are "justified by faith," not efficiently, but instrumentally. Faith is the hand that receives a justifying righteousness, but is *itself* no part of that righteousness. The efficient cause of a sinner's justification exists before faith exists in his mind; just as light exists whilst a man is blind: when his eyes are opened, he perceives the light, but his seeing is not the light; no more is faith that which efficiently justifies. The excellent Dr. Watts well expresses the sentiment in the following lines:—

"Jesus, how glorious is thy grace
When in thy name we trust!
Our faith receives a righteousness
Which makes the sinner just."

Every saved man rejoices in such a doctrine as this, and every sinner (if justified) is conscious of the glorious fact.

Mr. Lyford, a Puritan divine, a few days before his dissolution, being desired by his friends to give them some account of his hopes and comforts, replied, "I will let you know how it is with me, and on what ground I stand. Here is the grave, the wrath of God, and devouring flames, the great punishment of sin, on the one hand; and here am I, a poor, sinful

creature, on the other. But this is my comfort; the covenant of grace, established upon so many sure promises, hath satisfied all. The act of oblivion passed in heaven is, 'I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more, saith the Lord.' This is the blessed privilege of all within the covenant, of whom I am one. For I find the Spirit which is promised bestowed upon me, in the blessed effects of it upon my soul, as the pledge of God's eternal love. By this I know my interest in Christ, who is the foundation of the covenant; and therefore, my sins being laid on him, shall never be charged on me." We should strive to get clear views of the way of salvation and to be settled in the faith. If we have entertained erroneous views, let us never be ashamed to abandon them.

"If it be shameful to renounce error," says Mr. H——, "and sacrifice all to truth, I do very willingly take this shame to myself, in a copy of verses which I formerly wrote, sacred to the memory of a generous benefactor. I remember the following lines:—

^{&#}x27;Our wants relieved by thy indulgent care Shall give thee courage at the dreadful bar And stud the crown thou shalt for ever wear.'

These lines, in whatever hands they are lodged, and whatever else of a like kind may have dropped from my pen, I now publicly disclaim: they are the very reverse of my present belief, in which I hope to persevere as long as I have any being. Far be it from me to suppose that any work of mine should, in order to create my peace, or cherish my confidence, be coupled with Christ's most holy acts. I speak the words of our Church, and I speak the sense of the prophet, 'I will trust, and not be afraid.' Wherefore? because I am inherently holy? rather God is my salvation; God manifest in the flesh has finished my transgression, and made an end of my sin; and in this most magnificent work will I rejoice. Thy Maker is thy husband; the consequence of which is, all thy debts and deficiencies are upon him, all his consummate righteousness is upon thee."

Justification is within reach of all who can believe. It is the present privilege of all who believe. If we believe, we are justified. That justification is now complete and perfect; nothing can be taken from it, nothing can be added to it. We may grow in the enjoyment of it, but, so far as being dealt with as righteous on God's part is concerned, that is complete. God does

account us righteous; he does treat us as righteous; he governs us as some of his own children; and he lifts up the light of his countenance upon us, his anger being turned away. We must try and realize the blessedness of the justified and redeemed sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. We are encouraged in God's most holy Word to come and confess our sins, and we are assured that if we do we shall be forgiven; the sinner is only desired to acknowledge the debt, and the bond shall be cancelled. Is it not therefore better to be saved by Divine mercy than to be sued by Divine justice? As soon as we are oppressed and groan under under our burdens, we are sure to be eased by Christ's shoulders. If we remember our offences with unfeigned grief, the offended Lord joyfully forgives and forgets themall. We should approach the throne of grace with humility and with bitter crying; for we are verily guilty. A saint's tears are better than an angel's triumphs. Bernard said, "Lachrymæ pænitentium sunt vinum angelorum" (The tears of penitents are the wine of angels). We are nothing in ourselves; we can do nothing for our salvation unless God work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. We do not sail to glory in the salt sea of

our own tears, but in the red sea of a Redeemer's blood. "Crux Christi est clavis Paradisi" (The cross of Christ is the key of Paradise). We owe the life of our souls to the death of our Saviour. It was his going into the furnace which keeps us from the flames. Man lives by death; his natural life is preserved by the death of the creature, and his spiritual life by the death of the Redeemer. Moses must lead the children of Israel through the wilderness, but Joshua must conduct them into Canaan: while we are in the wilderness of this world we walk under the guidance of Moses, but when we enter the spiritual Canaan it must be under the leadings of Jesus. The same hand which shut the doors of hell, to keep us out of perdition, has opened the gates of heaven to admit us to its eternal fruition.

Those who carry the vessel of hope to the pool of their own merit will never draw the water of comfort from the fountain of God's mercy. We must all plead the merits of Jesus only; we must put on the robe of righteousness which he has graciously wrought out; we must be saved entirely by grace; we must be saved through faith in the blessed Redeemer. He is revealed to us in the Gospel as the Saviour of all

who believe on and trust him. We have only to look to him and live.

A bleeding Saviour seen by faith,
A sense of pardoning love,
A hope that triumphs over death,
Give joys like those above.
To take a glimpse within the veil,
To know that God is mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail—
Unspeakable, divine.
These are the joys which satisfy
And sanctify the mind,
Which make the spirit mount on high
And leave the world behind.

Let us come to Jesus with boldness at all times; and, should any one read this book who has never come to Christ for pardon, I would say, Delay no longer: come as you are: come now: believe God's Word now; for the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

I think I hear some poor conscience-stricken sinner saying, There never can be pardon for me; however great God's love and Christ's willingness to justify, my sins transcend them botn; "mine

iniquities are gone up unto the heavens, and my transgressions have reached unto the clouds."-My case is quite singular. Surely there never was so great a sinner as I. I have received so many mercies, have enjoyed so many advantages; I have heard so many invitations of Gospel grace; and yet my heart has been so hard, and my nature so exceedingly sinful, and the number and aggravating circumstances of my provocations have been such, that I dare not hope. It is enough that God hath supported me thus long; it is enough that, after so many years of wickedness, I am yet out of hell. Every day's reprieve is a mercy, at which I am astonished. I lie down, and wonder that death and damnation have not seized me in my walks the day past. I arise, and wonder that my bed hath not been my grave; wonder that my soul is not separated from the flesh, and surrounded with devils and damned spirits.

I have, indeed, heard the message of salvation; but, alas! it seems no message of salvation to me. There are happy souls that have hope; and their hope is indeed in Christ, and the grace of God manifested in him. But then they feel in their hearts an encouragement to apply to him, whereas I dare not do it. Christ and grace are things in

which, I fear, I have no part, and must expect none. There are exceeding rich and precious promises in the Word of God; but they are to me as a sealed book, and are hid from me as to any personal use. I know Christ is able to save: I know he is willing to save some. But that he should be willing to save me, such a polluted, such a provoking creature, as God knows, and as conscience knows I have been, and to this day am-this I know not how to believe; and the utmost that I can do towards believing it is to acknowledge that it is not absolutely impossible, and that I do not yet lie down in complete despair; though, alas! I seem upon the very borders of it, and expect every day and hour to fall into it.

Let it not be imagined that it is any neglect of that blessed Spirit whose office it is to be the great Comforter that I now attempt to reason you out of this disconsolate frame; for it is as the great source of reason that he deals with rational creatures, and it is in the use of rational means and considerations that he may most justly be expected to operate. Give me leave, therefore, to address myself calmly to you, and to ask you what reason you have for all these passionate complaints and accusations against

yourself? What reason have you to suggest that your case is singular, when so many have told you that they have felt the same? What reason have you to conclude so hardly against yourself, when the Gospel speaks in such favourable terms? Or what reason to imagine that the gracious things it says are not intended for you? You know, indeed, more of the corruptions of your own heart than you know of the hearts of others; and you make a thousand charitable excuses for their visible failings and infirmities which you make not for your own. And, it may be, some of those whom you admire as eminent saints, when compared with you, are, on their part, humbling themselves in the dust, as unworthy to be numbered amongst the least of God's people, and wishing themselves like you, in whom they think they see much more good, and much less of evil, than in themselves.

But, to suppose the worst, what if you were really the vilest sinner that ever lived upon the face of the earth? What if "your iniquities had gone up unto the heavens every day, and your transgressions had reached unto the clouds"—reached thither with such horrid aggravations that earth and heaven should have had reason to detest you, as a monster of impiety? Admit-

ting all this, "is anything too hard for the Lord?" Are any sins, of which a sinner can repent, of so deep a dye that the blood of Christ cannot wash them away? Nay, though it would be daring wickedness, and monstrous folly, for any "to sin that grace may abound," yet, had you indeed raised your account beyond all that Divine grace has ever yet pardoned, who should limit the Holy One of Israel, or who should pretend to say that it was impossible that God might, for your very wretchedness, choose you out from others, to make you a monument of mercy, and a trophy of hitherto unparalleled grace? The apostle Paul strongly intimates this to have been the case with regard to himself; and why might not you likewise, if indeed the chief of sinners, obtain mercy, that in you, as the chief, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them who shall hereafter believe?

Gloomy as your apprehensions are, I would ask you plainly, Do you in your conscience think that Christ is not able to save you? What, is he not "able to save, even to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him?" Yes, you will say, abundantly able to do it; but I dare not imagine that he will do it. And how do you know that he will not? He has helped the

very greatest sinners of all that have yet applied themselves to him; and he has made the offers of grace and salvation in the most engaging and encouraging terms. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Let him that is athirst "come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely"! "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and, once more, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." True, you will say, none that are given him by the Father: could I know I were of that number. I could then apply cheerfully to him. But, dear reader, let me entreat you to look into the text itself, and see whether that limitation be expressly added there. Do you there read, None of them whom the Father hath given me shall be cast out? The words are in a much more encouraging form; and why should you frustrate his wisdom and goodness by such an addition of your own? "Add not to his words, lest he reprove thee:" take them as they stand, and drink in the consolation of them. Our Lord knew into what perplexity some serious minds might possibly be thrown by what he had before been saying-"All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me;" and therefore, as if. it were on purpose to balance it, he adds these gracious words: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise"—by no means, on no consideration whatsoever—"cast out."

If, therefore, you are already discouraged and terrified at the greatness of your sins, do not add to their weight and number that one greater and worse than all the rest-a distrust of the faithfulness and grace of the blessed Redeemer. Do not, so far as in you lies, oppose all the purposes of his love to you. O distressed soul, whom dost thou dread? To whom dost thou tremble to approach? Is there anything so terrible in a crucified Redeemer, in the Lamb that was slain? If thou carriest thy soul almost sinking under the burden of its guilt, to lay it down at his feet, what dost thou offer him but the spoil which he bled and died to recover and possess? And did he purchase it so dearly that he might reject it with disdain? Go to him directly, and fall down in his presence, and plead that misery of thine, which thou hast now been pleading in a contrary view, as an engagement to your own soul to make the application, and as an argument with the compassionate Saviour to receive you. Go; and be assured that "where sin hath abounded, there grace shall much more abound." Be assured that if one sinner can promise himself a more certain welcome than another, it is not he that is least guilty and miserable, but he that is most deeply humbled before God, under a sense of that misery and guilt, and lies the lowest in the apprehension of it.

Never despair; never presume to limit God's power; never presumptuously question the Saviour's love; never yield to despondency or base unbelief. To every penitent but cast down soul I would reason thus: "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" (Isa. xl. 27, 28.)

Go, dear reader, to Jesus, and tell him all your cares; go to Jesus, and ask him to relieve you of all your burdens. Dry up your tears; for the Lord hath not forgotten to be gracious; his love is everlasting: it endures to all generations. Examine yourself often; for self-examination is one means to assist us in arriving at perfection: it is like fire, which not only tries the gold, but purifies it also. The sight of yourself in grace will bring you to the sight of God in glory. The plague

of the body is not every man's plague; but the plague of the soul is. If the latter were known more, the former would be feared less; though there may be a more pleasant, yet there is not a more profitable sight. Till you know how deep the pit is into which you are fallen, you will never properly praise that hand which raises you out of it; the bottom of our diseases lies in not searching our diseases to the bottom. So we have but some rays to cover our nakedness, we then wickedly despise the Saviour's righteousness: those who trust their own hearts are foolish: too often all of us thus err. The Lord searches all hearts; but he searches his people's hearts by the eye of his mercy. If a man would know whether the sun shines, it is better to view its beams on the pavement than its body in the firmament. The readiest way to know whether you are in Christ is to know whether Christ is in you; for the fruit on the tree is more visible than the root of the tree. We shall display our wisdom if we make God our friend in youth: if we give him no rest until we are assured by the Holy Spirit of our justification. God prizes a Christian in the bud, and delights in the blossoms of youth more than in the sheddings of old age. How

sad that plants should be found in Egypt that will thrive so well in Canaan!

God invites the young most tenderly to come to him and be saved; every inducement he holds out, even eternal life. "I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Let us all strive to "live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20).

"God justifieth a sinner through faith in Christ's blood." Faith is the instrumental cause of receiving this benefit, faith in the blood of Christ.

This faith is a believing on Christ, that we may be justified by him (Gal. ii. 16): "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law." We believe in Christ for justification, out of a sense of our inability to obtain justification by works.

This *faith* does not justify us, as an act of righteousness, earning and procuring our justification by the work of it; for this would have been justification by works, as under the law diametrically opposite to grace, and free gift; which excludes all consideration of any works

of ours to be our righteousness, under any denomination or diminutive terms whatever, whether you call it legal or evangelical; though you reckon it no more than the payment of a pepper-corn (Rom. xi. 6). Faith in this case is accounted a not-working (Rom. iv. 5). And it is not faith that stands instead of the righteousness of the law, but the righteousness of Christ, which satisfieth for what we ought to have done or suffered.

God justifieth by faith, as the instrument whereby we receive Christ, and his righteousness, by which we are justified properly; and we are justified by faith only metonymically, by reason of the righteousness received by it; and to be justified by faith and by Christ is all one (Gal. iii. 8; Rom. v. 19). By faith we receive remission of sins (Acts xxvi. 18, and x. 43). Its effect is the reception of justification, not the working it; as a man may be said to be maintained by his hands, or nourished by his mouth, when those do but receive that which nourisheth, his food and drink. The cup is put for the liquor in the cup (1 Cor. xi. 26, 27: see Rom. i. 17, and iii. 22). Christ is in us by faith (Eph. iii. 17); received, ate, drunk (John i. 12, and vi. 50, 51, 53, 54).

We must understand faith in a full sense, of receiving remission of the fault, as well as of the punishment. We believe God accounts not the fault of the least sin to us. And, where faith is said to be accounted for righteousness, it is because of the object it receives (Rom. iv. 5, 6, 7, 8; 2 Cor. v. 19, 21). We believe Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, as our sins are to him; or else we receive not remission of sins by believing; and this is the reverse of charging us with sin and condemnation, which charging signifieth imputing sin (Rom. viii. 33, 34). Together with the removal of the charge of sin, we receive the gift of righteousness (Rom. v. 17). And this we have in the reception of Christ's redemption (Eph. i. 7; Matt. xxvi. 28).

God, in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, aimed to declare his righteousness now under the Gospel, in the remission of sins that are past as well as present; of those sins that were past, and committed under the Old Testament, which was God's time of forbearing, thus pardoning long before his justice was actually satisfied by Christ's atonement (Heb. xiii. 8; Rev. xiii. 8; Matt. xviii. 26). The ground of those pardons is now revealed

by Christ's coming (Isa. li. 5, 6, and lvi. 1; Dan. ix. 24; 2 Tim. i. 9, 10), that those pardons may be no blemish to the now satisfied justice of God (Exod. xxxiv. 7; Psa. lxxxv. 10).

By this righteousness is meant that righteousness of God mentioned in the proposition (Rom. iii. 21, 22)—of which the text is but a confirmation-viz., the righteousness of God: not his essential righteousness, which is an essential property of God, but a righteousness which is upon all them that believe-Christ's righteousness, which is the end of the law (Rom. x. 3, 4), and therefore called God's righteousness; that which Christ wrought for us, which is given to us, and received by faith; that whereby Christ answered the law for us; by which, as the price, he redeemed us; which is called God's righteousness, because it is of God's working, and alone hath God's acceptance and approbation; as Christ is called the Lamb of God because God provided him, and accepts him, as an offering (John i. 29). In like manner Christ's kingdom is called the kingdom of God, because God's own hand sets it up, and maintains it, and rules it (Eph. v. 5). Christ, who became obedient to death, to work this righteousness, was God as well as man (Phil. ii. 6, 8). And this is that righteousness which the apostle opposeth to his own; that which is in Christ, which he had through faith. And this is the righteousness of God here, and in other places; the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. iii. 9).

God aimed at declaring, in Gospel times, his righteousness in forgiving sins past, in the time of God's forbearance under the Old Testament (Rom. iii. 25); and also in justifying those that believe in Christ at present: for it was by the righteousness of the same Christ that sins were pardoned under the Old Testament as well as now (Heb. xiii. 8). Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. xiii 8); only the righteousness was not actually fulfilled and revealed then, but it was shadowed out then, by the sacrifices, ransoms, redemptions, &c. (Heb. x. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10). So this was a time of God's forbearance; because he pardoned sins, as it were, without present payment and satisfaction. He had patience, and did not exact the debt, until Christ paid all (Matt. xvii. 26). But then God promised that he would reveal his righteousness in due time (Isa. lvi. 1, and li. 5, 6; Psa. xcviii. 2; Dan. ix. 24). And this he hath done by the appearance of Christ (2 Tim. i. 10).

The end of this manifestation is that God may appear just, in forgiving sins past as well as present, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Here the essential property of God is exalted, and appears glorious, in justifying by the forementioned righteousness of God.

As God justifieth freely by grace, he would appear hereby just in justifying sinners; for it would be a blemish to God's justice to forgive without a satisfaction, and righteousness performed; and therefore, though he is gracious and merciful, yet he will not clear the guilty (Exod. xxxiv. 7; Gen. xviii. 25; Exod. xxiii. 7). And so the saints of God concluded that God had a righteousness and redemption whereby he forgave sin, though it was not then revealed (Psa. li. 14, cxxx. 7, 8, and cxliii. 1, 2). God would have justice and mercy to meet in our salvation (Psa. lxxxv. 10).

God would have it appear that he only is just, and therefore saveth us, not by our own righteousness, but by his, which is indeed the more exalted by our unrighteousness, though God is not therefore unrighteous in taking vengeance (Rom. iii. 5; Dan. ix. 7).

God would appear to be the only procurer and worker of our righteousness, and so our

justifier by way of procurement, as well as by way of judgment; and so he will justify us by a righteousness of his own, and not by our own (Isa. liv. 17, and xlv. 22, 24, 25); that we may glory in the Lord only (I Cor. i. 30, 31).

These facts and glorious truths should serve for instruction, by way of encouragement and consolation. The great happiness of those who are in Christ is, that their sins are forgiven, and they accounted just in the sight of the Judge of all the world, through the redemption that is by the blood of Christ; and this benefit includes all blessedness of life, and the consequences thereof (Rom. iv. 6). That man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works hath a blessedness therein, and such an extensive blessedness, in regard of the spiritual part, as Abraham had, comprehending all spiritual blessings in Christ: for they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham (Gal. iii. 9). For this righteousness, being the fundamental blessing, is revealed from faith to faith; and they who are justified by faith through that righteousness do live by faith, always receiving it, and receiving nourishment and comfort by it (Rom. i. 17).

They are delivered from the charge of sin and

fault before God (Rom. viii. 33, 34). Who shall lay anything to their charge, or be suffered to bring in, at God's tribunal, any indictment, charge, or accusation against them? It is God that justifieth them; and Christ hath died and risen again. They are redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits to God and the Lamb. In their mouth there is no guile, and they are without fault before the throne of God (Rev. xiv. 4, 5; see also Col. i. 22).

They are delivered from all condemnation in sentence and execution; the curse and wrath of God (Gal. iii. 13). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (I Thess. i. 10). The wrath of God is an insupportable burden, and the foundation of all miseries; but this foundation is removed, and a foundation of blessedness laid, whereby we have peace with God, and are fully reconciled to Him (Rom. v. 1, 2; 2 Cor. v. 18, 19; Col. i. 21, 22). "You, that were some time alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight." Now, where there is no blame before God, there can be no wrath from God.

They have no need to seek salvation by the works of the law, and so are delivered from a yoke that cannot be borne; from endless observances that Pharisees and Papists have heaped up; from continual frights, doubts, fears, and terrors by the law (Acts xv. 10; Rom. viii. 15); from a wrath-working law (Rom. iv. 15); from a sin-irritating law (Rom. vii. 5); from a killing law, administration of death and condemnation (2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 9); Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage (Gal. iv. 24).

Hence they are delivered from a condemning conscience, which otherwise would still gnaw them as a worm (Heb. ix. 14). "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" A guilty conscience is a foul conscience; and it will make all services and duties dead works, unfit for the service of the living God: it is the blood of Christ, applied by faith, that takes off this foulness of guilt from the conscience; therefore the blood of Christ hath the only efficacy this way, to take off the

conscience of sin (Heb. x. 1—4, &c.) Hence they come to have a good conscience (1 Pet. iii. 21); void of offence towards God (Acts xxiv. 16).

It is an everlasting righteousness; by which their standing in Christ is secured (Dan. ix. 24). It is an eternal redemption that is obtained (Heb. x. 12). Whereas, by the law, those that were justified to-day typically might fall under condemnation, and so need another sacrifice for sin to-morrow, it is here far otherwise; here is an effectual, complete, and perpetual redemption, reaching the conscience of the sinner, and purging away all sins, past, present, and to come (I John i. 7).

It is a righteousness of infinite value, because it is the righteousness of God; whose name is Jehovah our Righteousness (Jer. xxiii. 6; Heb. ix. 14). It is therefore more powerful to save than Adam's sin was to destroy or condemn (Rom. v.) Christ is here the power of God (1 Cor. i. 24). Hence we are powerful, and conquer, by faith. Then, too, there is an abundance of mercy and grace, brought to us by Jehovah our righteousness; plenteous redemption (Psa. cxxx. 7). It must be plentiful, because infinite. Though no creature could

satisfy for sin, yet Jehovah could do it abundantly; and therefore in Christ God's mercy prevails over our sins (Psa. ciii. 11, 12).

God's grace and justice are both engaged on our behalf in this righteousness. Justice is terrible, and seems to be against mercy, and dreadful to natural people; but it is otherwise to believers: it is pacified and appeased through this righteousness; it is satisfied by Christ for our sins. Justice becomes our friend, unites with grace, and, instead of pleading against us, is altogether for us; and speaks contrary to what it speaks to sinners out of Christ (Josh. xxiv. 19, 20). We may also plead justice for forgiveness through mercy in Christ (Rom. iii. 26).

We may be sure of holiness and glory, of delivery from the power and dominion of sin, as well as the charge of it before God, and guilt of our own consciences; for this was the end of Christ's death (Tit. ii. 14; Rom. vi. 14, and viii. 3, 4, 30). Whom he justified, them he also glorified. The law was the strength of sin; for sin had its title to rule in us by reason of the curse; and thence Satan often rules: but here is our deliverance from sin and Satan; yea, from death too (Heb. ii. 14, 15; Hos. xiii. 14). In like manner, we are raised, by this

excellent righteousness, to a better state than we had in Adam at first; for Christ died that we might receive the adoption of sons, and the Spirit; that we might be brought under a new covenant, and be set in the right way of holiness, serving out of love (Gal. iii. 14; I John iv. 19; Gal. iv. 5; Heb. ix. 15; Rom. vi. 11; Luke i. 74; Col. ii. 13).

We may hence be sure of a concurrence of all things for our good. All things shall work for good, through grace to bring us to glory; because God is for us, who is the Creator and Governor of all things (Rom. viii. 28, 31, 33). God will never be wroth with us, nor rebuke us in anger any more (Isa. liv. 9; Rom v. 2—5).

Hence we may come before God without confusion of face; yea, with boldness to the throne of grace, in Christ's name (John xiv. 13, 14); and expect all good things from him: "in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Eph. iii. 12). "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 22, 23). Christ's blood pleads for us in heaven (Heb. xii. 24); and we may, and are to plead boldly on his account.

We live in times when this righteousness is fully revealed, and sin made an end of (Rom. iii. 21, 22). This is our happiness above those who lived before Christ's coming, who were under types and shadows of this righteousness; for we have the substance in its own light; and so are not under the law, which was to them as a schoolmaster. We are not servants, but sons, called to liberty (Gal. iii. 22, 26; iv. 7; and v. 13). The preaching the old covenant as a church ordinance still in force is ceased: the law is not now to be preached for justification as Moses preached it (Rom. v. 6—8; 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7; Gal. ii. 12, 24).

Reader, consider whether you are really sensible of sin and condemnation by the law. This is necessary to make us fly to Christ; and for this, as one great end, was the law given (Gal. iii. 22—24; Matt. ix. 13; Acts ii. 37). Without sense of sin, there is no prizing of Christ, or desire of holiness; but rather abuse of grace to carnal security and licentiousness. Those stung with the fiery serpents looked up to the brazen serpent.

It is well for you and me, dear reader, to probe ourselves with such searching questions as these: How does the doctrine of justification by faith affect us? Are we saved? Have we come to Christ for remission of sins; for the right end-viz., that we may be freed from the dominion of sin before the living God (Heb. ix. 14)? If otherwise, we can never have inward joy and peace. "Christ died that his seed might be justified" (Isa. liii. 10). Are we his children by faith? If not, we are the children of the Evil One. Abraham's confidence is the example and pattern of justifying faith: are we seeking to come up to his standard? If not, let us begin to-day, or it may soon be too late. Do we walk in holiness and strive to manifest this justification by the fruits of faith in good works? If otherwise, our faith is a dead faith: it is worthless; it is of no value to ourselves, and it is dishonouring to the Almighty. If we are born again, if we are regenerated, if we are real Christians, we shall show it by our lives and conduct; we shall be active and zealous in all good works: whatsoever our hands find to do, we shall do with all our might; we shall strain every nerve in the cause of Christ, and bring forth abundant fruit to the praise and glory of God our heavenly Father, who has, through his infinite goodness and mercy, his wondrous and almighty love, called us out of darkness into glorious light, and made us heirs of immortal bliss. Happy all who are thus circumstanced, all who are thus chosen and destined to live with all the heavenly host, and to dwell in the Saviour's presence for ever: "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Happy art thou, O Israel: who is a people like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?

My faith looks up to thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine:
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
O let me from this day
Be wholly thine.

May thy rich grace impart

Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire:
As thou hast died for me,
O may my love to thee

Pure, warm, and changeless be—
A living fire.

While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
Be thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From thee aside.

When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Saviour, then, in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above—
A ransomed soul.

GOD'S LOVE SANCTIFYING.

RUE holiness consists in the love of God and the love of man; that unforced, unfeigned, and most rational love of God which arises from a discovery of his unspeakable mercy and infinite kindness to us; that cordial, disinterested, and universal love of man which flows from the possession of a satisfactory and delightful portion in the Lord Jehovah. These duties of love to our Creator and our fellow-creatures are regarded as the sum and substance of the moral law; as the fountain from which all other good works and every instance of acceptable obedience flow. Holiness, thus stated, is considered not as the means, but as a part, a distinguished part of our salvation; or, rather, as the very central point in which all the means

of grace and all the ordinances of religion terminate. Man, in a natural state, is absolutely incapable of practising this holiness, or of enjoying this happiness. We are all born in sin, all prone to depart from the living God: the bias of our minds is opposed to righteousness and holiness: our natures are naturally sinful: we love darkness rather than light, because our deeds are evil. The way of holiness is only properly taught by the Holy Spirit; by that Spirit which enlightens and sanctifies; that Spirit which "leads and guides into all truth." Without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we are unable to understand God's Word, and totally incapacitated to perform our highest duties. The way of attaining to godliness is far from being known without learning from the Scriptures. We learn most things more quickly than consecration to God and separation from the world. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit: for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Though mankind are so vile and unworthy, God displays his infinite love in the doctrines of regeneration, justification, and sanctification. Though a sinner be as black as hell, God, by his grace,

cleanses and purifies him, until he makes him as white as snow. In consequence of the ample satisfaction made to Divine justice by our Divine Redeemer, we may ask for the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit; and, in answer to believing prayer, we shall be made holy, we shall become more God-like, more Christ-like, our spirit will be as becometh the Gospel, our lives will harmonize with its precepts, our fruits will be abundant, even "holiness to the Lord," we shall "mortify the deeds of the body," and live to the honour and glory or God. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

If we are God's children, we shall have fellowship with him; we shall walk in an honourable state with him, on honourable terms; and not as guilty creatures, to get our pardon by works, nor as bond-servants, to earn our meat and drink, but, as sons and heirs seeking the full possession of that happiness to which we have a title; we shall have much boldness in God's presence (Gal. iv. 6, 7). We ought daily to strive for sanctification of body and soul. God's Spirit sanctifies all who truly repent, and confidingly trust in him; that Spirit, which has sanctified all the redeemed now in heaven, can and will sanctify you and me, dear reader, if we pray that such may be the case.

God's love is sanctifying: this is often most visible in seasons of affliction. How apparent is the sanctifying influence of God's love in the life of a much tried, but devoted lady, who thus writes:—

Were I to recount all, or indeed any, of the gracious lovingkindness of my Lord to me during the painful, agonizing trials of body and mind in my illness, I must write volumes, and yet not have done. In the many nights almost entirely passed without sleep, how sweetly was my soul refreshed by his tender love! how did I sometimes feel Jesus as near me—yes, nearer to me than I was to myself! how was I enabled, by the Spirit, to fall before God in humble supplications, that, if necessary for my sanctification, he would heat the furnace seven times hotter; and to entreat him not to take away one pain ere it had accomplished all the good purpose of God! And, when the state of my head almost took away my memory, and entirely prevented my hearing one word of the Scriptures read, how delightfully was my soul permitted

to REST on Jehovah, in a way that was more precious to me than any pen can express! It was shown me too, constantly, that the way in which I was being led was a right way—the ONLY way in which I ought to be led to that "city of habitation" where I long to arrive; and clearly I perceived every particular trial as a direct answer to prayer. Gracious, merciful Father! by what endearing ways hast thou revealed thyself to me! Oh, may they never be erased from my mind, but may I praise thee in time, and for ever! Oh, I could burst with gratitude for such mercies; yet how cold, and heartless, and dull, and formal, and wandering I am in prayer, thou only knowest; yet I would pray, encouraging myself that I have a sinless High Priest to offer my petitions, that I may never be left to myself, but that, when any rebellion does lodge in that heart, which is so prone to entertain it, it may be purged. Yes: though the means of purging are even tenfold more bitter to my taste than those which have now been used.

And, now returning health seems in some degree advancing towards me, oh, let me not slide from thee: "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." If health must bring with it

duties and cares of a worldly nature, do thou, O my Lord, so order my heart that I may only perform these as a stranger and pilgrim; and let my soul return to thee, as its rest, each moment of the day and hour. And rather deny me any gift that I most prize, and give me any mortification and trial that I shall most feel, than suffer me to wander from thee. If now, O my God, my vile, ignorant heart is deceiving me, and I do not really wish the thing for which I ask; if thou (who, when I felt, as I thought, only a desire that the trial should not happen to me, saidst that it was rebellion which my heart felt towards thy will) now seest that I feel not the wish to be wholly devoted to thee, which I now write,-do thou then, omnipotent Spirit, descend upon me, that my heart may be made willing: change it and purify it: make me to desire thee above every good—to desire thee as my only good; to rest not, to be not happy, or even satisfied, till I enjoy constant communion with thee; till I have given me such a constant mental habit of prayer, that, while my hands are engaged with earthly concerns, my thoughts and heart may be in Heaven; till, in one word, the life which I now live in the flesh I may live, only and entirely, by the faith of the Son of God. Oh, grant this request; though, to grant it, thou seest it necessary to tear my heart asunder, grant it for the sake of Him who bore the curse for me—who died that I might have life, and who is now living and interceding for me.

The holy lives and the happy deaths of the excellent of the earth all prove the power of God's love and the all-sufficiency of his grace. In the most trying hours of affliction God, in infinite love, enables his people to bow with submission and resignation to his most holy will, God prepares his people for glory by sanctification. God hath abundantly discovered to us, in his Word, that his method in bringing men from sin to holiness of life is, first, to make them know that he loveth them, and that their sins are blotted out. When he gave the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, he first discovered himself to be their God, who had given them at the outset a sure pledge of his salvation by their delivery from Egypt (Exod. xx. 2). And, during Old Testament times, God was pleased to make the entrance into religion to be by circumcision: which was not only a sign, but also a seal of the righteousness of faith, whereby God justifieth people, while they are considered

as ungodly (Rom. iv. 5, 11). And this seal was administered to children of eight days old, before they could perform any condition of sincere obedience for their justification. Furthermore, in the time of the Old Testament, God appointed divers washings, and the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, to prepare and sanctify them for other parts of his worship, in his tabernacle and temple; to figure out his purging their consciences from dead works by the blood of Christ, that they might serve the living God (Heb. ix. 10, 13, 14, 22). This, I say, was then figurative sanctification, as the word sanctification is taken in a large sense, comprehending all things that prepare us for the service of God, chiefly the remission of sin (Heb. x. 10, 14, 18); though, if it be taken in a strict sense, respecting only our conformity to the law, it must necessarily be placed after justification, according to the usual method of Protestant divines. God also reminded them of the necessity of purging away their guilt first, that their service might be acceptable, by commanding them to offer the sin-offering before the burnt-offering (Lev. v. 8, and xvi. 3, 11). And, lest the guilt of their sins should pollute

the service of God, notwithstanding all their particular expiations, God was pleased to appoint a general atonement for all their sins one day in every year, wherein the scape-goat was to bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited (Lev. xvi. 22, 34). Under the New Testament God useth the same methodin loving us first, and washing us from our sins by the blood of Christ, that he may make us priests, to offer the sacrifice of praise and all good works to God, even the Father. Be ve therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us" (Eph. iv. 32, and v. 1, 2). "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (I John ii. 12, 15). I might quote abundance of texts of the same nature. We may clearly see by all this that God hath accounted it a matter of great importance, and hath condescended to take wonderful care in providing plentiful means, both under the Old and New Testament, that his people might be first cleansed from guilt, and reconciled to himself, to fit them for the acceptable practice of holiness. Away then with all the contrary methods of the new divinity!

God's love sanctifies his people, and thereby fits them for active service in the Church and the world. It separates them from iniquity, and prompts them to good works; it makes them examine themselves; and, when fully satisfied about their own safety, it makes them urge others to seek their safety and everlasting happiness. "Flee! flee! from the wrath to come," are words which proceed from their lips; they are ever watching and praying for the salvation of souls, the conversion of the whole world. A right-minded Christian is an active Christian: one who prays incessantly that all mankind may be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. God's love has so far sanctified some men that they have cheerfully given up all their worldly concerns and associations, and entered the jaws of death, in order to save souls.

In the south of Africa there was once a large lazar-house for lepers. It was an immense space, enclosed by a very high wall, and containing fields, which the lepers cultivated. There was only one entrance, which was strictly guarded. Whenever any one was found with the marks of leprosy upon him, he was brought to this gate and obliged to enter in, never to return. No one who entered in by that awful

gate was ever allowed to come out again. With in this abode of misery there were multitudes of lepers in all stages of the disease. Dr. Halbeck, a missionary of the Church of England, from the top of a neighbouring hill, saw them at work. He noticed two particularly, sowing peas in the field. The one had no hands, the other had no feet-these members being wasted away by disease. The one who wanted the hands was carrying the other who wanted the feet upon his back, and he again carried in his hands the bag of seed, and dropped a pea every now and then, which the other pressed into the ground with his foot; and so they managed the work of one man between the two. Two Moravian missionaries, impelled by an ardent love for souls, chose the lazar-house as their field of labour. They entered it never to come out again; and it was said that, as soon as these should die, other Moravians were quite ready to fill their place. "Ah! my dear friends," adds the late Rev. Robert M'Cheyne, "may we not blush, and be ashamed before God. that we, redeemed with the same blood, and taught by the same Spirit, should yet be so unlike these men in vehement, heart-consuming love to Jesus and the souls of men?"

Prayer is one important means whereby we may be sanctified: we are commanded to ask that we may receive; and, through the infinite love of God in Christ Jesus, we may draw near. very near, to the throne of the heavenly grace, though our sins have separated us from God and brought us under the curse of the law. Tesus has, through his atonement, paved the way for reconciliation; "for through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). Prayer brings the sanctifying influence of God's love upon us; prayer is the application of wants to him who alone can relieve it. Every one who has been sanctified by God's love has been most earnest, most constant, most fervent, most confiding in prayer. Prayer is not the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; not figures of speech, but compunction of soul: it is the "Lord, save us! we perish" of drowning Peter; the cry of faith to the ear of mercy. Dear reader, do you pray? if not, you have never had the love of God shed abroad in your heart: you are none of his. If you live in the neglect of prayer, you are a poor, miserable, wretched, condemned being, and in danger of perishing for ever. You cannot live in the neglect of prayer and be a Christian; you can-

not be a child of God and have no fellowship or communion with him: if you are born again you will have "fellowship with the saints and with the household of God." By prayer and holy communion with the people of God you may be sanctified. If you say you are such a great sinner that you cannot pray, that you cannot be saved, I must tell you you are fearfully deceived by the Evil One. God is willing to save the vilest, if they are penitent, if they are truly sorry for sin: your prayers are heard in heaven, and the prayers of friends for their relatives.

A lady in New York was one day called on by her pastor, who found her earnestly telling her newly converted husband of the assurance she felt that the Lord had heard her prayer for the conversion of an absent brother, who was engaged in mercantile business at the South. The husband, though recently brought to Christ in answer to her prayers, smiled incredulously at what he considered her enthusiasm. pastor pointed out passages of Scripture which warranted the pious woman, as he thought, in exercising such feelings and expectations, though he himself was but half convinced that the sequel would confirm her sanguine hopes. Her own confidence, however, was strengthened;

she felt more than ever assured that God had heard her supplications.

This lady had previously done all she could by writing to awaken her brother to a sense of his condition as a sinner, and then had besieged the throne of grace in his behalf. The result was that, as soon as a letter could come from the South, she received a letter from him, informing her that on that same afternoon, at the same time she was bowing her knees in his behalf in her closet, and her soul set at rest concerning him, he, thousands of miles away from his sister, entered into his chamber grieving over his sins. There he made a full surrender: there he knelt in sorrow, but arose rejoicing in Christ.

There is every reason to believe that believing prayer will be answered, whether it is offered for ourselves or for others. God's love is so great that he willingly listens to the most feeble cry of his children: he never has said to the seeking seed of Jacob "Seek my face" in vain. We must be very earnest in prayer, and very devout, in order to be benefited thereby. On the blessing attending importunity in prayer the Gospel is abundantly explicit. God often delays to give, that we may persevere in asking. He may require importunity for our own sakes,

that the frequency and urgency of the petition may bring our hearts into that frame to which he will be favourable. As we ought to live in a spirit of obedience to his commands, so we should live in a frame of waiting for his blessing on our prayers, and in a spirit of gratitude when we have obtained it: this is that preparation of the heart which would always keep us in a posture for duty. The love of God sanctifies our prayers. We ought not to let anything discourage us in prayer; however hopeless the case of the person may be for whom we pray, or however hopeless our own case, still we ought to be constant in prayer. Some of the most infidel and sceptical individuals have been saved through the fervent prayers and advice of God's people.

The Rev. Dr. Mason, of New York, was once requested to visit a lady in dying circumstances, who, together with her husband, openly avowed infidel principles, though they attended on his ministry. On approaching her bedside he asked her if she felt herself a sinner, and perceived the need of a Saviour. She frankly told him she did not, and that she wholly disbelieved the doctrine of a Mediator. "Then," said the doctor, "I have no consolation for you; not

one word of comfort. There is not a single passage in the Bible that warrants me to speak peace to any one who rejects the Mediator provided for lost sinners. You must abide the consequences of your infidelity." Saying that, he was on the point of leaving the room, when some one said, "Well but, doctor, if you cannot speak consolation to her, you can pray for her." To this he assented, and, kneeling down by the bedside, prayed for her as a guilty sinner, just sinking into hell; and then, arising from his knees, he left the house. A day or two after he received a letter from the lady herself, earnestly desiring that he would come and see her without delay. He immediately obeyed the summons; but what was his amazement when, on entering the room, she held out her hand to him, and said, with a benignant smile, "It is all true; all that you said on Sunday is true. I have seen myself the wretched sinner which you described me to be in prayer. I have seen Christ, that all-sufficient Saviour you said he was; and God has mercifully snatched me from the abyss of infidelity in which I was sunk, and placed me on the rock of ages. There I am secure; there I shall remain. I know in whom I have believed!" All this was like a dream to him;

but she proceeded, and displayed as accurate a knowledge of the way of salvation revealed in the Gospel, and as firm a reliance on it, as if she had been a disciple of Christ for many years. Yet there was nothing like boasting or presumption: all was humility, resignation, and confidence. She charged her husband to educate their daughter in the fear of God; and, above all, to keep from her those novels and books of infidel sentimentality by which she had been nearly brought to ruin. On the evening of the same day she expired in fulness of joy and peace in believing.

There is much pleasure and satisfaction in trying to benefit others. Prayer is one means whereby we can accomplish this end. We are commanded to "pray without ceasing:" we should pray for worldly comforts, and for a blessing on our earthly plans; and nothing should ever be undertaken by us without first asking Divine guidance and making all things known to our heavenly Father. "He performeth the thing that is appointed for us." Love to God should be the predominant feeling of our minds. A sincere love of God will make us thankful when our supplications are granted, and patient and cheerful when they are denied. He who

feels his heart rise against any Divine dispensation ought not to rest till, by serious meditation and earnest prayer, it be moulded into submission. The habit of acquiescence in the will of God will so operate on the faculties of his mind that even his judgment will embrace the conviction, that what he once so ardently desired would not have been that good thing which his blindness had conspired with his wishes to make him believe it to be. He will recollect the many instances in which, if his importunity had prevailed, the thing which ignorance requested and wisdom denied would have insured his misery. Every fresh disappointment will teach him to distrust himself and to confide in God. Experience will instruct him that there may be a better way of hearing our requests than that of granting them. Happy for us that he to whom they are addressed knows what is best, and acts upon that knowledge. Holy intercourse and familiarity with God will beget deadness to the present world; the soul that walks closely with God becomes increasingly like himassimilation is always a consequence of association with others. There is a natural tendency in man to imitate those who are his most constant and beloved companions.

two persons very dissimilar in disposition, habits, and expression were for a few years only to associate, exchange ideas, and read the same books, they would visibly approximate each other; and were they to reside together for many years, perhaps between them a few shades of difference only would remain. So a believer, in walking close with his God, becomes increasingly conformed to his likeness: he is daily "changed into the same image, from glory to glory." To walk with God is the first wish of a good man's soul whilst in this world, and to live with him in endless glory is the summit of his heart's desire for eternity: beyond this his immortal spirit cannot express a wish: short of this it cannot be fully satisfied. Do you, dear reader, walk with God? Do you delight in holy fellowship with God? Has the love of God sanctified you? Are you renewed by the Holy Spirit? Are you holy? Holiness is the best choice: there is no entering heaven but by the straight passages of the second birth: "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Are you saved through the infinite love of God? I must not trifle with you by saying "Peace, peace," if you have no ground for peace. I beseech you to suffer

friendly plainness and freedom with you in your deepest concerns: my work is not to please you, but to save you; nor is my business with your fancies, but your heart. If I were to please your ears, I could sing another song, I could tell you a smoother tale, I would make you pillows, and speak you peace; for how can Ahab love this Micaiah that always prophesies evil concerning him? (1 Kings xxii. 8.) But how much better are the wounds of a friend than the fair speeches of a harlot, who flattereth with her lips till the dart strike through the liver and hunteth for the precious life! (Prov. vii. 21-23, and vi. 26.) If I were to quiet a crying infant, I might sing him to a pleasant mood and rock him asleep; but, when the child is fallen into the fire, the parent takes another course: he will not go to still him with a song or trifle. I know if we strive not with sinners they will be lost; if we cannot get their consent to arise and come away, they will perish eternally. No conversion, no salvation: what a dreadful condition! this is the lamentable condition of millions. Now is it your condition, dear reader? if so, change it at once. Arise and call upon the living God, who will forgive you and sanctify you by his love.

I would not sacrifice my interest in the blessed Redeemer for ten thousand worlds. I would not part with the love of my Saviour for all the love of men and angels: with the love of God men may be happy under the greatest trials; without his love, when in the height of prosperity, they are miserable. God loves, blesses, and sanctifies in life, and in the hour of death. God never leaves his saints, but is very near them, especially when they most need his presence.

Dr. Payson, when dying, said, "My God is in this room: I see him; and oh! how lovely is the sight! how glorious does he appear! worthy of ten thousand hearts if I had so many to give!" At another time, when his body was racked by inconceivable suffering, and his cheeks were pale and sunken with disease, he exclaimed, like a warrior returning from the field of triumph, "The battle's fought! the battle's fought! and the victory is won! the victory is won for ever! I am going to bathe in an ocean of purity, and benevolence, and happiness to all eternity!" At another time he exclaimed, "The celestial city is full in view: its glories beam upon me; its breezes fan me; its odours are wafted to me; its music strikes upon my

ear, and its spirit breathes into my heart: nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears as a narrow rill, which may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission."

Death is an awful thing to the ungodly: they shudder to hear the name of death; but the righteous who love God, and who have been sanctified by his love, have no lasting fear: they are more than conquerors over the last foe. The Rev. William Janeway, who was so good a man, and who was the father of the Rev. John Janeway, being brought to his death-bed, endured great conflict of mind, and entertained many fears as to his future happiness. Under these circumstances, he asked the prayers of his son, who, though he entertained no doubt as to the real piety of his father, was filled with Christian sympathy; and, having retired, he spent some time in wrestling with God upon his father's account, earnestly praying that he would fill him with joy unspeakable in believing, and that he would speedily give him some token for good, that he might joyfully and honourably leave this world to go to a better. After he was risen from his knees, he went down to his sick father, and asked him how he felt himself. His father

made no answer for some time, but wept exceedingly, to which he was not subject, and continued for some considerable time weeping, so that he was not able to speak. But at last having recovered himself, with unspeakable joy he burst out into such expressions as these:-"O son, now it is come, it is come, it is come! I bless God I can die; the Spirit of God hath witnessed with my spirit that I am his child. Now I can look upon God as my dear father, and Christ as my Redeemer. I can now say, This is my friend, and this is my beloved. My heart is full-it is brimful; I can hold no more. I know now what that sentence means—The peace of God which passeth understanding. That fit of weeping which you saw me in was a fit of overpowering love and joy so great that I could not contain myself; neither can I express what glorious discoveries God has made of himself unto me. And, had that joy been greater, I question whether I could have borne it, and whether it would not have separated soul and body. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, who hath pardoned all my sins, and sealed the pardon! He hath healed my wounds, and caused the bones which he had broken to rejoice. Oh, now I

can die! It is nothing: I bless God I can die. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." In this delightful frame of soul he shortly after left earth for heaven.

No one is prepared to die unless he has been regenerated and sanctified by the love of God. Our blessed Saviour says, "I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified through the truth." We see plainly in the ceremonial laws that the completion and maintaining of the holiness of the temple of old, and of the priests that served in it, were entirely made to depend upon the offerings and purifyings of which the high priest was the minister. On his mitre was written "Holiness to the Lord;" and he typically bore the iniquity of the holy things of the children of Israel; and the purifying and cleansing and reconciling of holy things after they had been separated and dedicated, and possessed of God, are all represented as proceeding from the virtue of the sacrifices which he offered. In the sanctifying of the priests and of the tabernacle in the ceremonial law, observe every step of the process—the "sin-offering," the "whole burnt-offering," the "peace-offering," "the sprinkling of the blood," "the divers washings," "the anointing with oil," "mingled

with blood from off the altar," "the sweetsmelling savour" of the incense, that, with the fat of the inwards of the spotless victim, ascends in clouds before the mercy-seat—all are emblematical of Christ, not only our righteousness by imputation, but our sanctification by impartation and interposition. The holiness of the house and its servants was evidently made to depend on these rites and ministrations; and, though the character of holiness once given could not be lost or destroyed absolutely, yet the holy place was considered as always liable to contract defilement - nay, certain to have contracted it—and therefore there was a particular form of reconciling it every year, besides many private cleansings for particular errors and personal defilements. "And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." Thus the high priest was to do for himself and also for his household, and for all the congregation, and for the altar, until he had made an end of reconciling the holy place and the tabernacle of the

congregation and the altar (Lev. xvi.) On all this we may reflect with the apostle, "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of heavenly things should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Here then is the sanctifying that purgeth the conscience from all the filthiness of flesh and spirit which repentance can bewail or the laws discover and condemn. And, when that sanctity given has been polluted by any fresh uncleanness of flesh or spirit, profaning the eye of the Holy Ghost, the earnest of the

eternal presence, the reconciling of the saint must proceed on the same grounds-a fresh application through the spirit of the one offering of Him who came by water and blood. "The offering" has been made "once for all;" but the work of the Spirit in applying the same is going on continually. The High Priest, indeed, has not finished his whole work of sanctifying. He hath "sanctified himself that we might be sanctified through the truth." He is "our sanctification," appearing in the presence of God for us. "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." All this is in allusion to the high priest's going within the vail to make an atonement for the house and its servants. And, while we are members of the Church here below, we are to consider ourselves, like Israel of old, standing at the door of the tabernacle, waiting the return of the holy advocate who comes forth to bless them. We are encouraged while "perfecting holiness in the fear of

the Lord." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins;" he who "only is holy" in the absolute sense "bears the iniquity of our holy things;" and, though all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do, and we are "men made priests, who are compassed with infirmities," yet, seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us come, therefore, boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Do you, dear reader, come boldly and frequently to the throne of grace? If you do, you may obtain abundant grace—grace to restrain you, grace to preserve you, and grace to sanctify you through the love of God our Saviour. A true Christian is happy in life and in the prospect of death. Are you a Christian? A believer is willing to lose the world for the enjoyment of grace, and he is willing to leave the world for the fruition of glory. A person said to Philip J.

Jenks, just before he expired, "How hard it is to die!" He replied, "Oh, no, no—easy dying, blessed dying, glorious dying!" Looking up at the clock, he said, "I have experienced more happiness in dying two hours this day than in my whole life. It is worth a whole life to have such an end as this. I have long desired that I might glorify God in my death; but, oh! I never thought that such a poor worm as I could come to such a glorious death." May you and I, dear reader, be so sanctified by the love of God as to enjoy life by being active and useful and daily living in lively expectation and full assurance of a blissful immortality.

Come, let us to the Lord our God
With contrite hearts return:
 Our God is gracious, nor will leave
The desolate to mourn.

His voice commands the tempest forth, And stills the stormy wave; And, though his arm be strong to smite, 'Tis also strong to save. Long hath the night of sorrow reign'd;
The dawn shall bring us light;
God shall appear, and we shall rise
With gladness in his sight.

Our hearts, if God we seek to know, Shall know him and rejoice; His coming like the morn shall be, Like morning songs his voice.

As dew upon the tender herb,
Diffusing fragrance round,
As showers that usher in the spring
And cheer the thirsty ground:

So shall his presence bless our souls, And shed a joyful light; That hallowed morn shall chase away The sorrows of the night.

GOD'S LOVE GLORIFYING.

OUR blessed Redeemer will be satisfied when all the saved are glorified. How earnestly does he pray to his Father on the behalf of his chosen people! "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." What an honour to be glorified with the Son of God! I feel confident I shall dwell for ever in ineffable glory. Do you, dear reader? Do you enjoy the foretastes of heaven now? Do you derive consolation from the means of grace and the hope of glory? If not, there is something radically wrong; and I beseech you to examine the ground of your faith ere it is too late. I am sure every true

Christian is at times filled with joy when engaging in the worship of God. How often have I gone to the congregation troubled in spirit, and returned joyful! How often have I gone doubting, and God hath sent me home persuaded of his love in Christ! What cordials have I met with to animate me in every conflict! If but the face of Moses shone so gloriously, what glory is there in the face of God? If the feet of them that publish peace, that bring good tidings of salvation, be beautiful, how beautiful is the face of the Prince of Peace? If this treasure be so precious in earthen vessels, what is that treasure laid up in heaven? Blessed are the eyes that see what is seen there, and their ears that hear the things that are heard there. There shall I hear Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John, Peter, Paul; not preaching to gainsayers, in imprisonment, persecution, and reproach, but triumphing in the praises of him who hath raised them to honour and glory. Think also what joy it is to have access and acceptance in prayer, that I may always go to God, and open my case, and unbosom my soul to him as to my most faithful friend! but it will be a more unspeakable joy when I shall receive all blessings without

asking, and all my necessities and miseries will be removed, and when God himself will be the portion and inheritance of my soul. As for the Lord's Supper, what a privilege is it to be admitted to sit at his table! to have his covenant sealed to me there! But all the life and comfort there is to assure me of the comforts hereafter. O the difference between the last supper of Christ on earth, and the marriage supper of the Lamb at the great day! Then his room will be the glorious heavens; his attendants, all the hosts of angels and saints: no Judas, no unfurnished guest comes there; but the humble believers must sit down by him, and the feast will be their mutual loving and rejoicing. Concerning the communion of saints, think with thyself what a pleasure it is to live with intelligent and heavenly Christians! David says of such they were all his delight. O what a delightful society then shall I have above! Had I but seen Job on the dunghill, what a mirror of patience! and what will it be to see him in glory? How delightful to have heard Paul and Silas singing in the stocks! How much more to hear them sing praises in heaven! What melody did David make on his harp! But how much more melodious to hear that sweet singer in the heavenly choir! What would I have given for an hour's free converse with Paul when he was just come down from the third heaven! But I must shortly see those things myself, and possess what I see. Once more, think of praising God, in concert with his saints. What if I had been in the place of those shepherds who saw and heard the heavenly hosts singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men"? But I shall see and hear more glorious things. How blessed should I have thought myself had I heard Christ in his thanksgivings to his Father! How much more when I shall hear him pronounce me blessed! If there was such joy at bringing back the ark, or at rebuilding the temple, what will there be in the new Jerusalem? If the earth rent when the people rejoiced at Solomon's coronation, what a joyful shout will there be at the appearing of the King of the Church! If, when the foundations of the earth were laid, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, what a joyful song will there be when the world of glory is both founded and finished, when the top-stone is laid, and when the holy city is adorned as the bride, the Lamb's wife!

Compare the joy thou shalt have in heaven with what the saints have found in the way to it, and in the foretastes of it. When did God ever reveal the least of himself to any of his saints but the joy of their hearts was answerable to the revelation? In what an ecstasy was Peter on the mount of transfiguration!-"Master," says he, "it is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." As if he had said, "O let us not go down again to yonder persecuting table: let us not return to our mean and suffering state. Is it not better to stay here now we are here? Is not here better company and sweeter pleasure?" How was Paul lifted up with what he saw! How did the face of Moses shine when he had been talking with God! These were all extraordinary foretastes; but little to the full beatifical vision. How often have we read and heard of dying saints who have been as full of joy as their hearts could hold, and when their bodies have felt the extremity of sickness and pain, have had so much of heaven in their spirits that their joy hath far exceeded their sorrows! If a spark of this fire be so glorious, even amidst the sea of adversity, what.

then, is glory itself? O the joy that the martyrs have felt in the flames! They were flesh and blood as well as we: it must therefore be some excellent thing that filled their spirit with joy while their bodies were burning. Think, reader, in thy meditations, Sure it must be some wonderful foretaste of glory that made the flames of fire easy, and the king of terrors welcome. What, then, is glory itself? What a blessed rest, when the thoughts of it made Paul desire to depart and be with Christ, and makes the saints never think themselves well till they are dead! Shall Saunders embrace the stake and cry, "Welcome, cross," and shall not I more delightfully embrace my blessedness and cry, "Welcome, crown"? Shall Bradford kiss the fagot, and shall not I kiss the Saviour? Shall another poor martyr rejoice to have her foot in the same hole of the stocks in which Mr. Philpot's had been before her, and shall not I rejoice that my soul shall live in the same place of glory where Christ and his apostles are gone before me? Shall fire and fagot, prisons and banishment, cruel mockings and scourgings, be more welcome to others than Christ and glory to me? God forbid.

Compare the glory of the heavenly kingdom

with the glory of the Church on earth, and of Christ in his state of humiliation. If Christ's suffering in the room of sinners had such excellency, what is Christ at his Father's right hand? If the Church, under her sins and enemies, have so much beauty, what will she have at the marriage of the Lamb? How wonderful was the Son of God in the form of a servant! When he is born a new star must appear, and conduct the strangers to worship him in a manger; heavenly hosts with their songs celebrate his nativity; while a child he must dispute with doctors; when he enters upon his office, he turns water into wine, feeds thousands with a few loaves and fishes, cleanses the lepers, heals the sick, restores the lame, gives sight to the blind, and raises the dead. How wonderful, then, is his celestial glory! If there be such cutting down of boughs, and spreading of garments, and crying Hosanna for one that comes into Jerusalem riding on an ass, what will there be when he comes with his angels in his glory? If they that heard him preach the gospel of the kingdom confess "Never man spake like this man," they, then, that behold his majesty in his kingdom will say, "There was never glory like this glory." If. when his enemies came to apprehend him, they

fell to the ground; if, when he is dying, the earth quakes, the vail of the temple is rent, the sun eclipsed, the dead bodies of the saints arise, and the standers-by acknowledge, "Verily this was the Son of God," O what a day it will be when the dead must all arise and stand before him; when he will once more shake, not the earth only, but the heavens also; when this sun shall be taken out of the firmament, and be everlastingly darkened with his glory; and when every tongue shall confess him to be Lord and King! If, when he rose again, death and the grave lost their power; if angels must roll away the stone, terrify the keepers till they are as dead men, and send the tidings to his disciples; if he ascend to heaven in their sight, what power, dominion, and glory must he now possess, and which we must for ever possess with him! When he is gone, can a few poor fishermen and tent-makers cure the lame, blind, and sick, open prisons, destroy the disobedient, raise the dead, and astonish their adversaries, what a world will that be where every one can do greater works than these! If the preaching of the Gospel be accompanied with such power as to discover the secrets of the heart, humble the proud sinner, and make the most obdurate

tremble; if it can make men burn their books, sell their lands, bring in the price, and lay it down at the preacher's feet; if it can convert thousands, and turn the world upside down; if its doctrine, from the prisoner at the bar, can make the judge on the bench tremble; if Christ and his saints have this power and honour in the day of their abasement, and in the time appointed for their suffering and disgrace, what, then, will they have in their absolute dominion and full advancement in their kingdom of glory?

Compare the glorious change thou shalt have at last with the gracious change which the Spirit hath here wrought on thy heart. There is not the smallest sincere grace in thee but is of greater worth than the riches of the Indies; nor a hearty desire and groan after Christ but is more to be valued than the kingdoms of the world. A renewed nature is the very image of God, Christ dwelling in us, and the Spirit of God abiding in us: it is a beam from the face of God, the seed of God remaining in us, the only inherent beauty of the rational soul. It ennobles man above all nobility, fits him to understand his Maker's pleasure, do his will, and receive his glory. If this grain of mustard-

seed be so precious, what is the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God? If a spark of life which can but strive against corruptions, and flame out a few desires and groans, be of so much worth, how glorious then is the fountain of this life! If we are said to be like God, when we are pressed down with a body of sin, surely we shall be much more like God when we have no such thing as sin within us. Is the desire after and love of heaven so excellent: what then is the thing itself? Is our joy in foreseeing and believing so sweet: what will be the joy of full possession? How glad is a Christian when he feels his heart begin to melt and be dissolved by the thoughts of sinful unkindness! Even this sorrow yields him joy. O what then will it be, when we shall know, and love, and rejoice, and praise in the highest perfection? Think with thyself, "What a change was it, to be taken from that state wherein I was born, and in which I was riveted by custom, when thousands of sins lay upon my soul! and if I had so died I had been damned for ever! What an astonishing change, to be justified from all these enormous crimes, and freed from all these fearful plagues, and made an heir of heaven! How often, when I have

thought of my regeneration, have I cried out, "O blessed day! and blessed be the Lord that ever I saw it!" How then shall I cry out in heaven, "O blessed eternity! and blessed be the Lord that brought me to it!" Did the angels of God rejoice to see my conversion, surely they will congratulate my felicity in my salvation! Grace is but a spark raked up in the ashes, covered with flesh from the sight of the world, and sometimes covered with corruption from my own sight; but my everlasting glory will not be so clouded, nor my light be under a bushel, but upon a hill, even upon Mount Sion, the mount of God.

Every believer passes on from grace to glory: every vessel of mercy will find room in the ocean of glory. What the happiness of heaven will be I cannot fully describe. What the glory and brilliancy of the New Jerusalem will be exceeds my comprehension: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those who love and serve him." The glory of a future state is sufficient to make true believers endure the most bitter persecutions rather than deny their precious Saviour, and at last come short of the kingdom of

heaven. When Adrianus asked how the Christians could so patiently endure the tortures he had inflicted, they answered, "The love of Christ constraineth us, and the love of heaven encourages us." Those who are born blind cannot judge of the glories that dazzle the eyes of angels. One smile from God's face will for ever dry up all the tears from the saint's eyes. As fishes, dropping out of a narrow brook into the large ocean, do not lose, but enlarge their element, so, when the godly leave the Church militant, they do but increase their blessedness. As the flames of a burnt-offering ascend to heaven while its ashes fall to the ground, so the soul of a saint rises to glory while his body falls into the dusty grave. Dear reader, allow me to ask you, before you peruse the last page of this book, if you have any good reason to believe that you will be glorified with all the ransomed host; if you believe the love of God, the pardon of sin, and the everlasting joys of heaven; -- if so, you may rejoice with joy unspeakable, and exultingly exclaim, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." It doth not vet appear what we shall be; but, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Blessed are the sons of God! They are bought with Christ's own blood; They are ransom'd from the grave; Life eternal they shall have; All their sins are wash'd away; They shall stand in God's great day: With them number'd may we be, Now, and through eternity. They produce the fruits of grace In the works of righteousness; They are lights upon the earth, Children of a heav'nly birth; One with God, with Jesus one, Glory is in them begun: With them number'd may we be. Now, and through eternity. Though they suffer much on earth, Strangers quite to this world's mirth, Yet they have an inward joy, Pleasure which can never cloy; They alone are truly blest, Heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ: With them number'd may we be, Now, and through eternity.

GOD'S LOVE EVERLASTING.

OD'S love everlasting! What a delightful J thought is this! no change in the love of God towards poor sinners, no end to God's love towards all the redeemed! From the moment we become sons of God, he never ceases to love us; our sins and imperfections may cause him at times to hide from us his smiling face, but, if repented of, will never put out the flame of love and banish us to eternal perdition. Not all the men on earth, nor angels in heaven, can diminish the love which God our heavenly Father feels towards his children. God loves them for his Son's sake: he will honour the work of his Son by glorifying myriads of souls who deserved eternal misery as their portion. God loves to save men for Christ's sake; God

loves his Son with an infinite love, and Christ loves his people with the same. What are these blessed words which fell from the Saviour's own lips-" As the Father loveth me, so love I you"? Whether rich or poor, whether high or low, learned or unlearned. Christ loves the penitent sinner. The love of the world is not like his love: the world changes its affections; one day you may be idolized by the world, and the next day you may be trampled upon, and considered as an abomination, as an offence: it smiles one hour and frowns the next: it cries "Hosanna" today, and to-morrow "Crucify him;" but Christ's love is enduring, unchangeable: it is everlasting. The most faithful friends' natural love must cease, for they must die; but Christ's love will never cease: he ever lives, and has always been loving his people from the beginning: his love never dies, never waxeth cold. Christ's love is like a fountain, ever flowing, and never dried up; whom he loves from eternity, those he loves to eternity. "He loves them even to the end;" not a day, nor a month, nor a year, but even unto the end: "The love of Christ passeth knowledge."

In sorrow and joy, in adversity and prosperity, by day and by night, in life and in death, Christ's love is the same; when we most need a friend, the world forsakes us, but Christ draws nearer to us and proves himself to be "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Hope and the jewel of faith will be laid aside when this mortal shall be clothed with immortality, but the jewel love will sparkle amid the glories of heaven to all eternity. God says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Are these words true of you, dear reader? Is this a glorious declaration for your soul? Do you rejoice in the love of God in Christ, or have you no part or lot in the matter? Can you say, "because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee"? if so, you will for ever praise and adore redeeming love.

If God condescends to love us with an everlasting love, how very anxious should we be to be obedient to him, to honour him, to walk in newness of life, and to run in the way of his commands! Luther used to say, "God loves the runner, not the questioner." Grace grows by exercise, and decays by disuse. Though both arms grow, yet that which a man useth most is the stronger and the bigger: so it is both in gifts and graces. In birds, the wings which have been most used are strongest. The application of these truths is easy. Such men as are contented with so much grace as will bring them to glory, with so much grace as will keep hell and their souls asunder, will never be rich in grace nor high in comfort or assurance; such souls usually go to heaven in a storm; oh, how weather-beaten are they before they can reach the heavenly harbour!

If we are the subjects of God's love, we shall be diligently seeking the salvation of precious immortal souls; we shall not spare the ungodly, but speak as if we never should speak again, as dying men to dying men; we shall not fear offending any, but be faithful to all. Themistocles being about to speak to the general of the Grecian army against Xerxes, the latter held up his staff, as if he were about to strike him: "Strike," said Themistocles, "but yet hear." So should every Christian say, strike, but yet hear; despise, but yet hear; censure, but yet hear; oppose, but yet hear; do what you will, but yet hear. "Non amat, qui non zelat," saith Augustine: "He is no friend to God who is not zealous for him"

When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, saith the history, there was presented to him in a dream a pillar of fire, with this motto, Talis est Basilius, "Basil is such a one:" all on fire for God. So every Christian should be all on fire for God. The love of Christ should constrain every believer to every good word and work. The everlasting love of God is clearly made known to us by the volume of inspiration, which book we should prize more than all others. It is said of Cæsar that he had greater care of his Commentaries than of his royal robes; for, swimming through the water to escape his enemies, he carried them in his hand above the water, but lost his robes. But what are Cæsar's books to God's book? The Word is the field, and Christ is the treasure that is hid in that field. The Word is a ring of gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring of gold; and is it, then, worth nothing? Yea, it is worth all worlds; and Christians should act, and all ministers should preach, as though they really believed this. Let ministers live such holy lives so as to be able to say, "Be followers of me, even as I am of Christ." Alexander had somewhat a wry neck, and his soldiers thought it an honour to be like him. Oh, it is an honour to ministers when their people are like them in knowledge, wisdom, love, humility, holiness!

Plutarch said of Demosthenes that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors, but not so in imitating them. Ah! many in these days are excellent at praising and commending the holy and gracious actings of ministers and teachers, but not so in imitating them. Alas! alas! the love of God is nothing to them: they are not its subject or they would show it by bringing forth their fruit unto holiness; and the end, everlasting life. Reader, if you are a Christian, you know what the love of God is, and you have no reason to fear the day of judgment, but rather to hail that day as one of the most blessed to God's people. When the Judge arises and ascends to his Father's court, all the blessed shall ascend with him, and you among the rest; you shall ascend together with your Saviour, "to his Father, and your Father, to his God, and your God." You shall go to make your appearance in the New Jerusalem, in those new shining forms that you have received, which will no doubt be attended with a correspondent improvement of mind, and take up your perpetual abode in that fulness of joy with which you shall be filled and satisfied in the presence of God, upon the consummation of that happiness which the saints

in the intermediate state have been wishing and waiting for. You shall go, from the ruins of a dissolving world, to the new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness for ever dwells. There all the number of God's elect shall be accomplished, and the happiness of each shall be completed. The whole society shall be presented before God, as the bride, "the Lamb's wife," whom the eye of its celestial Bridegroom shall survey with unutterable delight, and confess to be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; its character and state being just what he originally designed it to be, when he first engaged to give himself for it, to redeem it to God by his blood. So shall you ever be with each other, and with the Lord; and immortal ages shall roll away, and find you still unchanged; your happiness always the same, and your relish for it the same; or rather ever growing, as your souls are approaching nearer and nearer to him who is the source of happiness, and the centre of infinite perfection.

And now look round about upon earth, and single out if you can the enjoyments, or the hopes, for the sake of which you would say, "Lord, delay thy coming;" or for the sake of which you any more should hesitate to express your longing

for it, and to cry, "Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" Make the following prayer your own:—

O blessed Lord! my soul is enkindled with these views, and rises to thee in the flame. Thou hast testified, thou comest quickly; and I repeat my joyful assent, "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus!" Come, for I long to have done with this low life; to have done with its burdens, its sorrows, and its snares! Come, for I long to ascend into thy presence, and to see the court thou art holding above!

Blessed Jesus, death is transformed when I view it in this light. The king of terrors is seen no more as such, so near the King of glory and of grace. I hear with pleasure the sound of thy feet approaching still nearer and nearer: draw aside the veil whenever thou pleasest. Open the bars of my prison, that my eager soul may spring forth to thee, and cast itself at thy feet; at the feet of that Jesus whom, having not seen, I love, and in whom, though now I see thee not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory! Thou, Lord, shalt show me the path of life; thine hand shall guide me to thy blissful abode, "where there is fulness of joy," and rivers of everlasting plea-

sure. Thou shalt assign me a habitation with thy faithful servants, whose separate spirits are now living with thee, while their bodies sleep in the dust. Many of them have been my companions in thy laborious work, and in the patience and tribulation of thy kingdom; my dear companions, and my brethren. O show me, blessed Saviour, how glorious and how happy thou hast made them! Show me to what new forms of better life thou hast conducted them whom we call the dead, in what nobler and more extensive services thou hast employed them, that I may praise thee better than I now can, for thy goodness to them. And () give me to share with them in their blessings and their services, and to raise a song of grateful love, like that which they are breathing forth before thee!

Yet, O my blessed Redeemer, even there will my soul be aspiring to a yet nobler and more glorious hope; and from this as yet unknown splendour and felicity shall I be drawing new arguments to look and long for the day of thy final appearance. There shall I long, more ardently than I now do, to see thy conduct vindicated, and thy triumph displayed; to see the dust of thy servants reanimated, and death,

the last of their enemies and of thine, swallowed up in victory. I shall long for that superior honour that thou intendest me, and that complete bliss to which the whole body of thy people shall be conducted. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" will mingle itself with the songs of paradise, and sound from the tongues of all the millions of thy saints, whom thy grace hath transplanted thither.

In the meantime, O my divine Master, accept the homage which a grateful heart now pays thee, under a sense of the glorious hopes with which thou hast inspired it! It is thou who hast put this joy into it, and hast raised my soul to this glorious ambition; whereas I might otherwise have now been grovelling amid the lowest trifles of time and sense, and been looking with horror on that hour which is now the object of my most ardent wishes.

O be with me always, even to the end of this mortal life! And give me, while waiting for thy salvation, to be doing thy commandments. May my loins be girded about, and my lamp burning, and mine ears be still watchful for the blessed signal of thine arrival, that my glowing soul may with pleasure spring to meet thee, and be strengthened by death to bear those visions

of glory, under the ecstasies of which feeble mortality would now expire!

O LOVE Divine, how sweet thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by thee?
I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me!

Stronger his love than death or hell;
Its riches are unsearchable:
The first-born sons of light
Desire in vain its depths to see;
They cannot reach the mystery,
The length and breadth and height.

God only knows the love of God:
O that it now were shed abroad
In this poor stony heart!
For love I sigh, for love I pine:
This only portion, Lord, be mine;
Be mine this better part.

O that I could for ever sit
With Mary at the Master's feet!
Be this my happy choice,
My only care, delight, and bliss,
My joy, my heaven on earth be this,
To hear the Bridegroom's voice.

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). God's love is justifying, God's love is sanctifying, God's love is glorifying, God's love is everlasting.

"Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."

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